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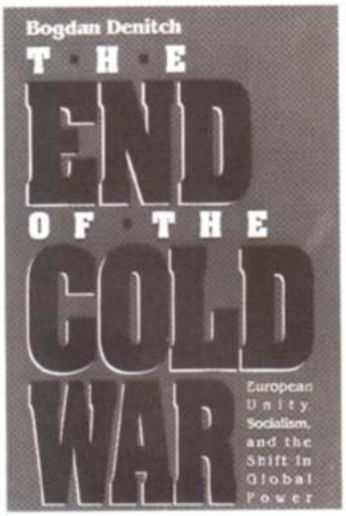

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Among Our Contributors

DANIEL BELL is emeritus professor of social science at Harvard University. His 1960 volume, *The End of Ideology*, was reissued, with a long Afterword, in 1988 by Harvard University Press

DAVID BROMWICH'S latest book is *A Choice of Inheritance*.

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG is a widely published authority on Soviet and Eastern European affairs and editor of the forthcoming *Perestroika: Chronicle of a Revolution*.

PAUL BUHLE'S latest book is *C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary*.

MITCHELL COHEN traveled to Germany and Hungary for *Dissent*. He is the author of *Zion and State: Nation, Class and the Shaping of Modern Israel*.

OLIVER CONANT is a New York-based writer and critic.

LEWIS COSER writes frequently for *Dissent*.

ROBERT DAHL is the author of *Democracy and Its Critics* (1989) and other books on democratic theory and practice.

BOGDAN DENITCH recently returned from Yugoslavia. His most recent books, all published in 1990, are *The Socialist Debate*, *The End of the Cold War*, and *Limits of Change: The Crisis of Yugoslav Socialism and State Socialist Systems*.

THOMAS BYRNE EDSALL is the author of *Power and Money: Writing About Politics*.

CYNTHIA FUCHS EPSTEIN is the author of *Sex, Gender, and the Social Order*.

TODD GITLIN'S most recent book is *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Bantam). He teaches sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

GORDON HASKELL, former political director of Democratic Socialists of America, was born and raised in Bulgaria. He recently returned from a three-week visit to Sofia.

JOSEPHINE HENDIN is the author of *Vulnerable People: A View of American Fiction Since 1945*.

RUTH JORDAN is a writer who consults frequently with educational groups.

PAUL JOSEPH is associate professor of sociology and chair of the Peace and Justice Studies Program at Tufts University.

ERAZIM KOHÁK'S latest book is *Jan Patočka: Philosophy and Selected Writings*.

GEORGE KONRAD is a well-known Hungarian writer.

PATRICK LACEFIELD is political director of Democratic Socialists of America. He lived in El Salvador for two years and is working on a book about that country.

JEREMY LARNER is a screenwriter in California.

RICHARD LOURIE is completing *Russia Speaks: An Oral History from the Revolution to the Present*.

NEIL MCLAUGHLIN teaches sociology at Queens College.

HAROLD MEYERSON is executive editor of the *L.A. Weekly* and a member of the National Political Committee of Democratic Socialists of America.

NICOLAUS MILLS is currently editing a collection of essays on the 1980s, *Culture in an Age of Money*, most of which

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first appeared in *Dissent*, which will be published this fall by Ivan Dee, Inc.

LAWRENCE MISHEL is research director at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.

KENNETH POMERANZ is an assistant professor of history at the University of California, Irvine, specializing in nineteenth and twentieth century China.

BERNARD ROSENBERG writes frequently for *Dissent*.

M. EDITH RASELL is staff economist at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.

NICK SALVATORE, author of *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist*, is working on a biography of Amos Webber, an unskilled nineteenth century African-American worker.

JEFFREY SCHEUER is a New York writer and critic.

FRED SIEGEL is the author of *Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan*.

JERZY SURDYKOWSKI is a well-known Polish journalist and former vice president of the Polish Journalists Union.

VLADIMIR TISMANEANU is a resident scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia and a lecturer in political science at the University of Pennsylvania. He is completing a history of Romanian communism.

JAMES TOBIN is Sterling Professor Emeritus of Economics at Yale University. He was awarded the Prize in Economic Science in Memory of Alfred Nobel in 1981. He was a member of President Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisers in 1961–62.

LAWRENCE WESCHLER is a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, where his most recent report on Poland appeared in the November 13, 1989 issue. The piece published here is an expansion of a followup article that originally appeared in the *Village Voice* on January 2, 1990.

JOSEPHINE WOLL frequently writes about Russian culture. She is completing a book on the Soviet novelist Yuri Trifonov.

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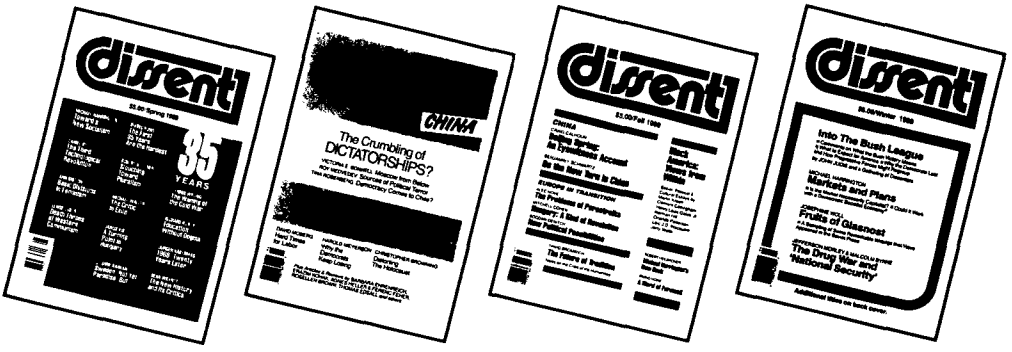

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Irving Howe

SOVIET TRANSFORMATION

Nothing in our past thinking, or in anyone else's, prepared us for the remarkable turn of events in the Soviet Union. So much the worse for theory, so much the better for life!

The word "historic" has been reduced to shreds in discussion of the latest moves by the Gorbachev leadership, but it is exactly the right word. Historic! The decision by the Communist party's Central Committee to scrap Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution (the article guaranteeing the party a "legal" monopoly of power) is of revolutionary significance. It formalizes the end of "Marxism-Leninism" according to Stalin and his successors; it legitimizes the beginnings—so far, only the beginnings—of political pluralism in the Soviet Union; and it opens the prospect—distant, barely visible, but authentic—of a major positive development in the future of that tormented nation.

Shifting to a multiparty system would reach the crux of democracy, and we had always said that such a shift would form the decisive barrier for the Soviet leadership. Evidently, that barrier has begun to be surmounted. The actual changes will no doubt face enormous difficulties. In some regions, the nomenklatura (the entrenched party-state bureaucracy) will strive to trip up the burgeoning democratic movements. But unless there occurs a violent counterrevolution led jointly by the communist hard-liners, fearful of losing their powers, and the xenophobic nationalists, eager to gain some powers—something which seems unlikely right now but is not to be ruled out for a later moment—the direction of events seems clear. As Emanuel Geltman has remarked in conversation, it's as if the Constituent Assembly dispersed in 1917 by the Bolsheviks because, as a result of Russia's last free election, it had a non-Bolshevik majority—it's as if this Constituent Assembly were now to be revived. And who knows? Perhaps in some way rich with historical symbolism, it may yet be.

The sclerotic but still imposing party machine, reaching into every locality and every socioeconomic enterprise, is threatened not only by the prospect of free elections. Its power is also threatened, more immediately, by internal disintegration, both moral and intellectual. Recalled with hatred by aging victims of the Stalinist terror, disdained by young people cold to all ideologies and sometimes all politics, suspected by unnumbered ordinary people, held in contempt by intellectuals, the party suffers from a visible crisis of confidence. Terror gone, belief cracks. What belief? Does anyone still give credence to the "Marxism-Leninism" poured into the ears of the young?

The party has become an arena for two or three quasi parties. At the center politically and in control of the Moscow apparatus is the Gorbachev group, nervously aware that the country it rules, or seems to rule, could any day burst into violent chaos. On the right, the hard-liners offer little but resentment; they lack any program except an implausible yearning to return to Brezhnevite stability, that is, a paralyzing stagnation. On the left, the radicals, anxious lest time be running out, believe Gorbachev must move more urgently toward democracy and economic reform. Formally these tendencies or factions exist in one party, but increasingly they draw apart. And even in the ranks of Gorbachev's followers, there is a spectrum of opinions; they are held together by their leader's gifts and also by a shared sense that they must act together or everything will fall apart. If and when there are some modest economic successes, if and when the tendencies toward nationalist dispersion can be checked, we may expect sharpening differences within the Gorbachev ranks.

And the party's future? A split at the forthcoming Congress or soon afterward is quite possible. The sullen hard-liners, mired in bad faith, might then decide to go their own way, quite as have their cothinkers in some Eastern European countries, declining into narrow sects (though the sect in Russia would contain a large potential for mischief). Less likely—by now who will say anything is impossible?—is that Gorbachev, through or even apart from the party, may decide to change political

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face and find a fresh political label, quite as several Communist parties in Europe have already done. We might, in a few years, even reach the piquant moment when Gorbachev or a segment of his party would apply for admission to the Socialist International!

Meanwhile, the most important political event is Gorbachev's intent to widen the distance between state and party, thereby gaining greater independence for the state and minimizing party dictate or "vanguard" directives. If not sufficient, such a move will surely be a necessary condition for solving the grave problems facing the Soviet Union. It would form part of the trend toward a civil society, one in which the precondition for both political and economic reform would be the breakup or significant weakening of the nomenklatura, that bureaucratic slug that weighs down upon the Russian people.

It would be foolhardy to say much about the economic problems in this brief comment, though I think it clear that an end to forced collectivization in agriculture, a more rational price system, and some encouragement to modest entrepreneurship that avoids profiteering would surely help. The time also seems ripe for a measure advocated by economists near Gorbachev but for some reason not yet initiated: a purchase abroad of consumer goods in order to ease the lot of the people and gain time for *perestroika*.

A "peace dividend" makes good sense in the Soviet Union, quite as in the United States. (Who is the Soviet Irving Kristol sagely denying this to be possible?) Cut military spending radically in both superpowers, and use the funds and energies saved to cope with urgent social problems. (As our conservatives were prattling about "the triumph of capitalism," the news appeared that there has been—*after all these years!*—a large growth of child labor in American sweatshops and that a tide of homeless youths, numbering some 500,000, sweeps across the country. Also a "triumph"?)

For liberals and socialists, committed in principle to democracy, the response to the remarkable changes announced in the Soviet Union ought to be clear. We welcome them. We hope, with whatever critical reservations, for the success of Gorbachev's program. And we are appalled by those American political and intellectual figures who, openly or with a sly wink, hope for an apocalyptic blowup in the Soviet Union, a catastrophe that could only give comfort to the darkest, most xenophobic and anti-Semitic forces.

On the very day the Central Committee in Moscow said it intended to scrap Article 6, that dinosaur in the White House proposed that . . . Star Wars be expanded. "On to the wars," cried he, while joining a mock battle in California. A shameful response! We, on the contrary, believe that it is in the interests of all humanity to provide economic help to the Gorbachev regime in order to enable further democratization and economic improvement.

And meanwhile we look forward to the formation, or reformation, of the Social Democratic party of the Soviet Union. □

Some Candid Admissions

It is the end of the road for the communist system as we have known it: the central plan, the authoritarian state, the single-party system, the subjugated civil society. Stalinism is dead, and Leninism—its theory of the state, its concept of the party, the absence of civil society, its notion of revolution—has also had its day.

The old communist bloc represented no way forward for the left. It was a blind alley, and while it survived it cast a long shadow over the prospects for the left throughout the world.

One tradition which belonged to a particular epoch may be exhausted, but that doesn't mean that socialism itself is over. Rather, it must be redefined in terms of the new circumstances and aspirations.

From the keynote speech by MARTIN JACQUES, editor of *Marxism Today,* at the Congress of the British Communist party, November 25, 1989.

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Michael Walzer

. . . AND WITH FINGERS CROSSED

In the old days we confronted historic events with theories of history in hand, and so we placed the events in their appropriate sequences and evaluated their likely outcomes. But I have no theory of history with which to address the extraordinary events now taking place in the Soviet Union. It is easy to talk about "the democratic revolution" as if that were a well-anticipated and readily understood phenomenon, fitting nicely into our political chronologies (some would even say, eschatologies). What is happening in Central and Eastern Europe, however, looks more like a *national* democratic revolution, the fulfillment at last—in 1990!—of 1848. At the end of the twentieth century, we find ourselves unexpectedly confronting the promises and problems of the nineteenth: nations in revolt, professors drafting constitutions, new parliamentary regimes in the making, the market being tested. After forty years of Stalinist rule, it is entirely wonderful—and what comes next no one knows.

The Soviet Union is even harder to understand. One man has made too much of a difference. How should we think of him? A democratic Lenin? Martov as dictator? The Kerensky of our time? A failed Peter the Great? Or will he be remembered in his own name, without analogies: Gorbachev, the last known chairman of the CPSU, miraculously reincarnate as Russia's first president? He promises "humane, democratic socialism," but it is hard to see how he can achieve anything like that in the absence of a popular movement for either democracy or socialism. I find myself, a little reluctantly, wishing him the success that Machiavelli wished for his prince: power for a moment and democratic heirs.

Meanwhile, the intelligentsia is in ferment, and we can recognize in its midst many people like ourselves, friends and (would they welcome the title?) comrades, whom we would help if we possibly could. There are others too, however, distinctly unfriendly. And the Russian people seem disorganized, angry, cynical about the possibilities of politics. In the peripheral republics of the "Union," by contrast, popular movements of considerable strength have sprung up, virtually replacing both the party and the state. But these are so fiercely and singlemindedly nationalistic that other aspects of their politics remain radically unclear. Were Russia to follow the lead of the republics, the country as a whole might well be engulfed in civil war. Not, this time, between "red" and "white" armies: we would need a far more complicated color scheme.

And yet, while only the insane and the simple-minded will give up worrying, this is a moment of hope. So much that was ugly has been recognized for what it was and repudiated. The new freedom, if it hasn't yet produced a coherent politics, has opened up space for opposition newspapers and journals, civic and religious associations, trade union organizing, sharp and exhilarating public debate—the re-creation of civil society. Though this is still very much a revolution from above, it is driven by and at least partially responsive to discontent below. Ordinary people are not yet politically engaged, but they can nonetheless be powerful in their resistance—as when they forced the Soviet government to end its January call-up of reserves. The resources necessary for renewed repression don't seem to be waiting for some demagogue or hard-liner to seize: they just aren't there. And in the half-democratic elections of 1989, people turned out in large numbers, treating party functionaries with contempt and displaying considerable sophistication in the choices they made among opposition candidates. In Russia itself, the nationalists did not fare well. They have done somewhat better since, at least in agitation and propaganda, generating a near panic among Soviet Jews. Whether the new civil society in Russia or in the republics will be genuinely pluralist and tolerant is as uncertain as everything else. But the "long dark night" is definitively over.

Not every morning, of course, is the start of a good day. It is, however, suddenly and happily, morning again. Deprived of any sure knowledge of the dialectic, our fingers are crossed. □

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Harold Meyerson

GEORGE BUSH AND "THE VISION THING"

This is the bystander administration, the peripheral presidency. As the world is redefined, the United States has largely absented itself from the re-creation. Washington, where government is less inclined to action than at any time since the 1920s, has virtually ceased to generate news of interest. It is Prague, Bucharest, and Moscow that rivet our attention; Bonn, Tokyo, and Brussels that we look to for serious response. The American Century has lurched to a halt, and George Bush pursues policies that have the effect of dissolving it in a torpor of inactivity.

There are two dimensions to the American absence. The first is fiscal: at Bush's insistence, we have refused to place enough funds into the public sector (armaments excepted) to address either the world's needs or our own. The second is rooted in the sense the administration conveys that it has few if any goals to pursue even if the funding were there. In 1988, after all, Bush commended himself to the electorate (to the limited degree he did) through his experience rather than his program, much less any vision. The last thing he must have bargained on was having to reconceptualize the world, to jettison the strategies of decades, to think historically. It's an intimidating charge for an administration whose one contribution to political discourse is the notion that history is over.

The only discernible goal of the Bush administration, beyond reelection, is defensive:to hold most of the ground conservatives gained in the first years of the Reagan administration. In March of 1989, the Republican Congressional leadership repaired to Williamsburg, Va. for a weekend retreat with administration leaders to learn what agenda the White House really wanted. "That's what we're here to find out," Bush's Chief of Staff John Sununu reportedly stated. "What do you think it ought to be?"

By the new measures of national might, where an educated workforce, a healthy industrial base, and a high level of social solidarity matter more than the Stealth bomber program, America is becoming Richard Nixon's "pitiful, helpless giant." The state has been smashed—not by antiwar activists but by antitax crusaders. Statecraft has been reduced to symbols. We cannot seriously combat crime, but we can lock up Willie Horton. We cannot offer significant aid to the fledgling democracies of Eastern Europe, but we can bag Noriega. We cannot impede the dismantling of our industrial base or increase funding for research and development, but we can criminalize flag burning.

Bush is not the master of symbols that Reagan was, but he dwells in the same hall of mirrors, where the business of government is gesture and poll-taking. He also exhibits an odd quality of dissociation that goes beyond the normal political bobbing and weaving: Dan Quayle delivers speeches to conservative audiences contradicting the administration's Soviet policy; Lee Atwater brings the Flem Snopes Code of Ethical Practices to the Republican National Committee—but these are merely other gestures for other audiences, nothing for which anyone could conceivably hold Bush accountable. Everything is spin.

His current polls notwithstanding, Bush remains vulnerable on three counts that resist symbolic solution. The first is a recession, now rumored—by the *Wall Street Journal*, no less—to be lurking round the corner. The second is the abortion issue, where momentum shifted to the prochoice side after the ruling of the Reaganized Court to chip away at *Roe v. Wade*. The dismantling of Roe clearly has the effect of dismantling the Reagan majority, splitting vast numbers of younger Republicans from the ticket, as last November's elections demonstrated. It's an issue Bush and Atwater are trying desperately to finesse—the zeal of the Reaganauts is a thing of the past now—though it's not clear or even likely they will succeed. One index of how thoroughly American politics has turned around on this issue is that Bush would likely recoil in horror at the

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prospect of a Supreme Court seat falling open, say, in early 1992.

A third peril to Bush and the conservative order is the ending of the cold war. The diminution of the Soviet threat and the neutralization of Eastern Europe imperils the military economy, increasingly centered in Sunbelt regions of GOP strength. It is not just that the worldview that has sustained American conservatism for forty-five years is now outmoded, or even that specific weapons systems are without a strategic raison d'être. (Against whom is SDI supposed to be targeted? The FMLN? The Medellin Cartel?) The cold war's termination threatens the whole, vast military economy that has grown up over the past four decades and that offers Republican administrations reflationary tools, as it did Reagan in 1982–83 when the economy hit the skids.

Swept along by the currents of history, the Bush administration has, however, proposed mutual cuts in U.S. and Soviet armies stationed in central Europe. A good idea, of course, though one that has already been under negotiation for a time—Bush's proposal in his State of the Union address comes mostly as a PR ploy. For each superpower to keep 225,000 troops in central Europe is hardly an idea commensurate with the new possibilities for mutual reduction of arms.

Over the long term, cutting the defense budget confronts Bush with a series of unpalatable choices. Reducing the deficit sizably could plunge an already weak economy into a recession. But to throw a cool $100 billion, say, into social spending or rebuilding cities, or into education and the environment could raise real wages for the first time since the sixties, reduce disparities in wealth, enhance the status of women and minorities—in sum, make this a kinder and gentler nation. But Bush knows with existential certitude that he was not elected to preside over the dissolution of inequality in America.

So there is little wonder that the Bush administration's response to the revolutions sweeping the globe has gone well beyond prudence into procrastination and occasional irritation. In late December, while the Congressional Joint Economic Committee and the American Economic Association held hearings on the economic implications of the cold war's end, no one in the administration had yet been assigned to focus on the topic. "We are much too preoccupied with the immediate year to think about five or ten years out," one official told the *New York Times*.

The Chinese uprising and subsequent crackdown confronted Bush with a choice between democratic values and personal ties. It was no contest. Repudiating Deng would have called into question more than past policy. As the *Wall Street Journal* documented, it would have been a blow to the finances of Kissinger & Associates—and until they took up their posts in the Bush administration, those Associates were Brent Scowcroft (now national security adviser) and Laurence Eagleburger (now Deputy Secretary of State). Worse yet, it would have undermined the value of China hand Bush's contacts and resumé. While the critics of Bush's post Tiananmen policy focused on the Chinese repression, Bush responded as if he himself were under attack (and persuaded Republican senators to sustain his veto of the student visa statute on the basis of loyalty only). His critics, Bush charged, were "using this fantastically, diabolically, anti-me language." (What language Bush uses remains a subject of ongoing fascination, though his inarticulateness may actually help him out a bit. It is difficult to impute sinister intent to anyone whose speech is so often goofy.)

Administration policy becomes less personalized, more conventionally conservative, in questions of international economics. In two instances, these policies seem inimical to a presumable major goal of our foreign policy, the care and cultivation of democratic regimes. In a third instance, they seem inimical to defending living standards at home.

- On Latin America, Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady, Bush's closest friend, has enabled creditor banks to cease all further loans to the continent in exchange for a slight write-off of existing debt. The effect has been to leave virtually without credit a number of major nations—Argentina, Brazil, Chile—that are making a difficult transition back to democracy. "In an unseemly rush for the door," the *Wall Street Journal* recently reported, "banks—particularly the big U.S. institutions—have been scrambling to get out of all lending to countries considered to be heavily indebted."

- Similar priorities inform administration fiscal policy toward Eastern Europe. The United States, allied solely with Margaret Thatcher's Britain, is trying to funnel all Western loans into the private sector only, as if the Warsaw Pact nations had no infrastructure or public sector needs. More immediately, the United States-dominated International Monetary Fund is imposing draconian terms on these states in exchange for loans: in the past few weeks, Poland has had to raise the price of bread by 38 percent, of coal by 600 percent as a condition for funding. Hungary has similarly had to slash its services and raise its prices and rents. Finally, of course, direct U.S. aid to the East is confined to the measly dribs of the Gramm-Rudman era.

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It is, all in all, a chilly welcome for our democratic soulmates. The end of the cold war apparently requires the payment of reparations from the losers (or more precisely, from the victims). As Keynes pointed out in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace,* driving this kind of bargain only impoverishes nations we should be seeking to enrich and undermines democratic regimes we supposedly wish to stabilize. Democracy and capitalism, George Bush asserted in his address to the UN, are indissolubly linked. But this is a precept that American fiscal policy seems perversely intended to dispel.

If the Bush aid policy is dominated by banks, the Bush trade policy caters to American-based transnational corporations—or, more precisely, to their boardrooms. Bush is taking a more active role than Reagan in promoting American investment overseas. Last summer, obliged to find some role for Dan Quayle, the administration sent its *blunderkind* off to the third world with the goal of engendering American factories abroad. To this end, the vice-president became the first high American official to lobby foreign governments (Indonesia's and Thailand's) on behalf of particular American companies (General Electric and Guardian Industries)—this from an administration that would never consider asking a General Electric, say, to keep open, let alone build, a factory here at home.

On another trade front, Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher and trade negotiator Carla Anderson Hills spent much of 1989 persuading Japan to open its markets to Motorola's cellular phones and promoting Zenith's High Density Televisions (HDTV), while discouraging our HDTV competition, Sony and the Dutch-controlled Philips corporation. Problem is, Motorola makes its phones in Malaysia, and Zenith's televisions come from Mexico. The only stateside HDTV manufacturing takes place at the factories of Sony and Philips. The Bush administration identifies the national interest with an American transnational corporation's logo, its management, its shareholders—and not with American workers.

In all fairness, Bush never claimed to take an activist view of government. The Democrats have no such excuse. In Bush's first year, the Democrats mounted an even feebler resistance to inegalitarian and jingoistic policies than they had during the Reagan presidency—something one would have thought not just a political but an arithmetic impossibility. Emerging from the darkness of the Reagan years, the nation finds that the Democrats have effectively vanished.

When not reeling from one ethics scandal to the next, the Democrats spent 1989 trapped within fiscal-political confines prescribed by the Bush White House. At their best, they proposed a little more aid to Eastern Europe, a little more funding for education and the environment, a halfway house measure on health insurance. They failed to offer a serious counterproposal to the Savings and Loan bailout, to the "free trade" policies of domestic disinvestment. They cheered the Panama invasion.

Democrats were at their worst precisely on those fairness issues that have historically been at the core of the party's identity. More than sixty House members crossed over to support Bush's capital gains giveaway. The Democratic congressional leadership, as of this writing, has been downright discouraging toward Daniel Patrick Moynihan's proposal to cut the Social Security tax. Nothing better illustrates how postpopulist, how altogether denatured, the party has become than its failure to respond to the Moynihan plan. By cutting the level of Social Security withholding tax for 111 million working Americans, the proposal would reduce the regressivity of a tax structure where Social Security taxes currently produce more revenue than income taxes. Three-fourths of American taxpayers—middle class, working class, and poor, the Democratic coalition—pay more in Social Security taxes than they do in income taxes. And still the party rejects the proposal, and those few who embrace it seem to have forgotten how to defend it.

Moynihan himself, for instance, dwells more on the misleading use of Social Security surpluses to meet Gramm-Rudman targets than on the equity issue. And no one yet is willing to drop the necessary other shoe: to suggest an offsetting increase in progressive taxation. A Gallup Poll last year showed 82 percent of respondents favoring an income tax increase on those making over $80,000 yearly, but this is apparently not a sufficient majority to embolden a Democrat to speak on the subject. "If we can't get behind an issue like this," Moynihan said recently of his own proposal, "I'm not sure who needs the Democratic party."

But Moynihan's timing is off. In 1989, the Democrats were beholden more to money and less to more popular constituencies than at any time since the late nineteenth century, possibly than at any time in their history. In 1988 Democratic members of Congress received $31.7 million from the PACs of corporations, trade, and financial associations, and a mere $24 million from unions.

The Democrats suffer from a deeper corruption, though, than that which comes from contributions. The evisceration of government's interventionary

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capacity has injected a futility, a purposelessness into politics that renders the Democrats unable to act on behalf of their broad constituencies. To cite just one example: since the passage in California of Proposition 13 in 1978, the Democratic majority on the board of the Los Angeles Unified School District, where the student population has increased by hundreds of thousands with the epochal immigration from Asia and Latin America, has been able to build a grand total of one new school. The network of services and opportunities that would have bound the party to earlier waves of immigrants has never been set in place; the involvement of that population in politics is correspondingly lessened, that of the standing armies of wealth and power accentuated all the more. It is a quarter-century this year since the Great Society was proclaimed, a quarter-century since the Democrats practiced, however imperfectly, a politics of equity and opportunity. As they enter the nineties, an entire generation of Democratic officials seems to have forgotten not only how to practice it, but even how to advocate it.

The polls may show that the public wants more spending on education and the environment, or even that it supports funding through more progressive taxation. The Democrats—even the best of the Democrats, even Barney Frank in an utterly dispiriting symposium on the party's future in a recent *Harper's*—know better. That is effectively the difference between the two parties in the age of George Bush: The Republicans are the party that doesn't want to do anything; the Democrats are the party that, here and there, wants to do something, but that knows it can't be done.

George Bush did not by himself hollow out the government. It was empty when he came to the White House, though his subsequent policies have ensured that it stay empty, ineffectual, symbolic only. His distinctive contribution to the time is his own lack of purpose and agenda.

By his unending busyness, Bush suggests that beneath his fear of being labeled a wimp lurks a deeper hollowness, an uncertainty of identity to be overcome daily through the reassurances of constant recognition. "Bush's entire approach to life can be summarized in two words: Keep moving," a Bush intimate told the *New York Times*. "This man never wants to be alone. If he's ever confronted with that prospect, he gets on the phone, he grabs people, he goes on a trip." The title has by all accounts given him new confidence, offered confirmation that he is doing something right. "If you're so damned smart," the *Times* reports he jokingly tells his aides, "why are you doing what you're doing and I'm President of the United States?" Government without purpose, action without agenda, Skull without brain, Bones without flesh, George Bush rattles on. □

Mark Levinson

A PEACE DIVIDEND FOR THE U.S. ECONOMY?

As the cold war winds down questions arise: How much should the defense budget be cut, and what should be done with the money freed? What will be the effect of such cuts on an economy in which the share of manufacturing devoted to the military increased significantly in the 1980s?

One view is that of the conservative economist Herbert Stein, of the American Enterprise Institute, who argues against cuts in defense programs "until the size, durability and significance of the changes in Europe are clearer than they are now." (What must or can happen to convince such people that military spending should decline?) By contrast, two ex-Pentagon officials at the Brookings Institution have published a plan to reduce the military budget by half over a ten-year period.

The Bush administration has taken a position that appears to be in the middle. Defense Secretary Cheney has asked the three services to suggest how they might change their spending plans if they were forced to cut 5 percent in each of the next five years. The outcome was a seemingly large $180 billion cut. In fact, this proposal would maintain military spending at about the current level because the decline in spending rep-

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resents a lowering of future growth in the defense budget. (This is what passes for sophisticated politics today—provide the illusion of change while maintaining the status quo.) No wonder President Bush said there will be no "peace dividend."

The military, wary even of Cheney's proposal, hinted that national security might be threatened. The air force predicted that it would close fifteen bases, eliminate five fighter wings, stop buying F-16 fighters, retire Minuteman 2 missiles and B-52 bombers, and slow down its rate of purchases of Stealth bombers. The navy warned of a hundred fewer ships and two fewer carrier battle groups by 1994. The army claimed it would have to lay off 200,000 people.

But perhaps our security is no longer to be measured by the size of the military budget. It may be that our country's greatest weakness lies in the public realm—the shocking economic inequality, urban centers that resemble underdeveloped countries, rotting roads and bridges, second-rate education and training, shameful neglect of the young. These failings will not be repaired unless we dramatically increase the size of the public sector. One step would be to transfer money from the military to the civilian sector.

"Realists" will be quick to point out that billions of dollars cannot be immediately transferred to the civilian sector because much of next year's defense budget is already locked in (bills due from previous commitments) and, furthermore, that whatever money is available must be used to reduce the federal deficit.

Neither of these objections is convincing. The question is not how much can we cut the military budget next year but, rather, what are our social priorities for the next decade. During the Reagan administration the military budget doubled while programs serving the low-income population were cut by 40 percent (after adjusting for inflation, by 54 percent). In 1988 alone, if the defense share of the budget had stayed at the 1981 level, there would have been $40 billion available for human needs and improvement in public works. If this kind of shift could take place in less than a decade, there is no reason why a shift in the other direction should take any longer.

On the deficit: at the end of their recent book (*The Debt and the Deficit: False Alarms/Real Possibilities*), Robert Heilbroner and Peter Bernstein state, "By no stretch of the imagination can 'reducing the deficit' be considered as America's number one problem. . . . If it were America's number one problem, we would be very well off indeed." As to why this is true I refer the reader to their book and a cogent essay by Jeff Faux in *Dissent* (Winter 1990). To use the money from defense cutbacks to reduce the deficit would be wasteful and dangerous. Cutting government spending when the economy is weak, as it now is, might result in a recession.

Which brings us to the politics and economics of cutting defense spending. The political problem was dramatically illustrated several years ago when then Senator Tower, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, sent a letter to members of Congress who had been talking about the need for cutbacks in military expenditures. In his letter, he requested these members of Congress to respond with a specific list of military programs in their own districts that they believed should be eliminated. He received no replies.

This is compounded by the fact that during the Reagan years American manufacturing has become increasingly militarized. In the 1980s, while military spending doubled, high interest rates drastically reduced civilian manufacturing. As a result, the defense share of output increased significantly in many manufacturing industries.

Simply cutting back on military expenditures would create considerable economic distress in an economy as militarily oriented as the United States. According to the Department of Labor, Pentagon outlays in 1976 generated only 1.9 million jobs in the private sector—compared with 3.1 million today. If many of these workers lose jobs because of military cutbacks, their loss of income will lead to a cutback in their consumer spending that in turn will generate further layoffs in industries supplying consumer goods. Similarly, lower purchases by the military-industrial firms will generate multiplier effects that will add to unemployment.

Increasing government spending in nonmilitary areas and cutting interest rates would stimulate the economy and work against rising unemployment. But an expansionary policy is not directed at specific industries or geographic areas. Military industry and bases are gathered in tightly concentrated pockets in every region of the nation. Such pockets include Dallas–Fort Worth (military electronics and aerospace), Los Angeles (aerospace), Groton–New London area in Connecticut (military shipbuilding), Seattle (aerospace), St. Louis (aerospace), and Boston-Cambridge (military electronics).

If military spending is reduced—even with money transferred to the public sector—the only way to avoid recessions in these areas is to plan to convert military-oriented facilities and work forces to civilian production. Because it is doubtful that this administration will support planning for conversion, the attempt to solve one problem (excessive defense

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spending) will likely create another (unemployment).

Conservatives will solemnly explain that this is an example of how unintended consequences often overwhelm the best-intentioned attempts at social reform. In fact it demonstrates how conservative policy, that is, an aversion to planning and a simplistic reliance on markets, produces conservative results. □

Galbraith on the Market

The wholly uninhibited and self-sufficing capitalist entrepreneur and the sacrament of central planning are, each in its own way, destined for that famed dustbin of historical obsolescence.

With the advent of *perestroika*, both economic systems now embrace the rhetoric of the market and the entrepreneur. As with ours, it may well be that much of the Soviet rhetoric is more enthusiastic than real.

The basic, terrible truth is that if any system is going to make steel, automobiles, chemicals or pharmaceuticals, it will be done on a large scale. Modern industrial development requires the combined efforts of many different talents and specializations and much differing experience. Only large organizations can fulfill the tasks of production. A fringe of small, innovative firms that operate under the classical market rules will, of course, continue to exist in the United States, but the solid core is still going to be General Motors, USX, Johnson & Johnson, and IBM. So, in one way or another, it will be in the Soviet Union. Both we and Mikhail Gorbachev have our imagery; we both are subject to controlling circumstance.

What Free Market? As I am not prepared to accept the romantic glamour attached to entrepreneurship in the United States, I view the much celebrated move to the market in the Soviet Union with some reserve. One hopes that some of the massive ministries will be broken up and that their industries will be made subject to market tests; something resembling a market may develop in light consumer goods, clothing styles and in services like auto repair. But I don't think for a moment that Gorbachev or anyone else is going to turn the hard core of Soviet industry over to the free, unregulated market. We haven't done so in the United States; we haven't turned the core of our economy over to the free market.

No American politician would dream of allowing agriculture to go back to the market by voting to remove the tens of billions in annual income-support subsidies. *Perestroika* American-style is off limits when it comes to wheat or milk. Only recently have we provided the U.S. steel industry with another five years of protective quotas. Our auto industry is similarly protected; so is sugar. In California, the headquarters of the free-market entrepreneur, the growers—the *gosplanners* of California's largest industry, agriculture—meet, under government sponsorship, to control, through market boards, the sale of their major produce. An enormous amount of effective market control—control comparable in a lesser way to that of the great Soviet ministries—rests with the largest U.S. firms. The thousand largest corporations do a full two-thirds of all industrial business. Market control is implicit in this concentration. And if the great firm mismanages on a large enough scale, the government intervenes to ensure "market and employment stability."

Our oratory celebrates the market, except in those wonderful cases where the market imposes hardships that nobody wants to suffer. So, I venture, it will be in Russia. Perhaps the Poles, to take one case from the Eastern Bloc, may be willing to make more radical concessions to capitalism than we are. They seem more willing to close down the inefficient Gdansk shipyard, where Solidarity was born, than we are to lift the coastal monopoly we give to our inefficient shipping industry.

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

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Lawrence Mishel & M. Edith Rasell

ON EDUCATION SPENDING AND CAPITAL GAINS

George Bush wants to be the "education president" without spending money on education. Last year he achieved a "presence" on this issue by stealing the Democrats' idea of an "Education Summit." This is part of a "let them eat rhetoric" policy that covers domestic issues.

Until recently this approach to education worked because it was also coupled with deceit. Bush declared at the "Education Summit" that the United States "lavishes unsurpassed resources on schooling." Therefore, "Our focus must no longer be on resources. It must be on results." Roger Porter, the White House domestic policy adviser, said, "We spend $353 billion on education. . . . It is a lot in comparison with other countries. It's more per capita, more per student, it is more as a share of our gross national product. We spend one-and-a-half percent[age points] more than the Japanese do on education. . . . Our education system has not lacked for resources during this decade."

The administration's analysis of comparative education spending is at best misleading and, at worst—well, a lot worse. It is true that the United States spends more than other countries on education, but only because we spend substantially more on *higher* education. In 1985 roughly 5 percent of the U.S. population was enrolled in colleges and universities, at least double the rates in Japan, France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

But the current crisis of American schools is not in higher education; it is in the primary and secondary schools. A comparison of funding for all levels of education thus obscures the main concern about American education. Our recent Economic Policy Institute report ("Shortchanging Education") shows that the United States spends a far lower share of gross domestic product (a measure of national income similar to the more familiar gross national product) on kindergarten to twelfth grade (K–12) education than other industrialized countries. United States K–12 spending is less than that of eleven of the sixteen countries considered.

Calculations of funding adequacy must also be related to the size of the school-age population in each country. Among the countries studied, the United States enrolls a relatively large percentage of the population in preprimary, primary, and secondary school. For example, over 19 percent of the U.S. population is enrolled in K–12, but less than 15 percent of the West German population and only 14 percent of the population in Switzerland. When we take into account the relative size of each country's K–12 enrollment among the sixteen countries studied, the United States spends less on K–12 education than all but Australia and Ireland.

Our study shows that in 1985 (the latest data available) the United States spent 4.1 percent of its national income on K–12 education, far lower than the average of 4.6 percent spent abroad. *For U.S. spending to come up to this average, in 1985 we would have had to raise K–12 spending by more than $20 billion.* And between 1980 and 1985 the U.S. ranking in education spending fell from twelfth to fourteenth.

The Bush analysis also obscures the effect of reduced federal spending on total K–12 education spending. State and local governments increased their education spending from 1980 to 1985 while the federal government has cut back. The consequence has been that for every three steps forward by state and local governments, the federal cutbacks have caused one step backward. This is especially dramatic given that the federal government provides only about 7 percent of K–12 education expenditures.

Cross-country comparisons of spending do not, of course, tell us how much we should spend on particular education programs or on education as a whole. It is clear that more money by itself will not fix our educational problems of high dropout rates, nearly illiterate high school graduates, low scores on achievement tests, unprepared workers, and citizens ill-equipped to participate in democracy. At the same

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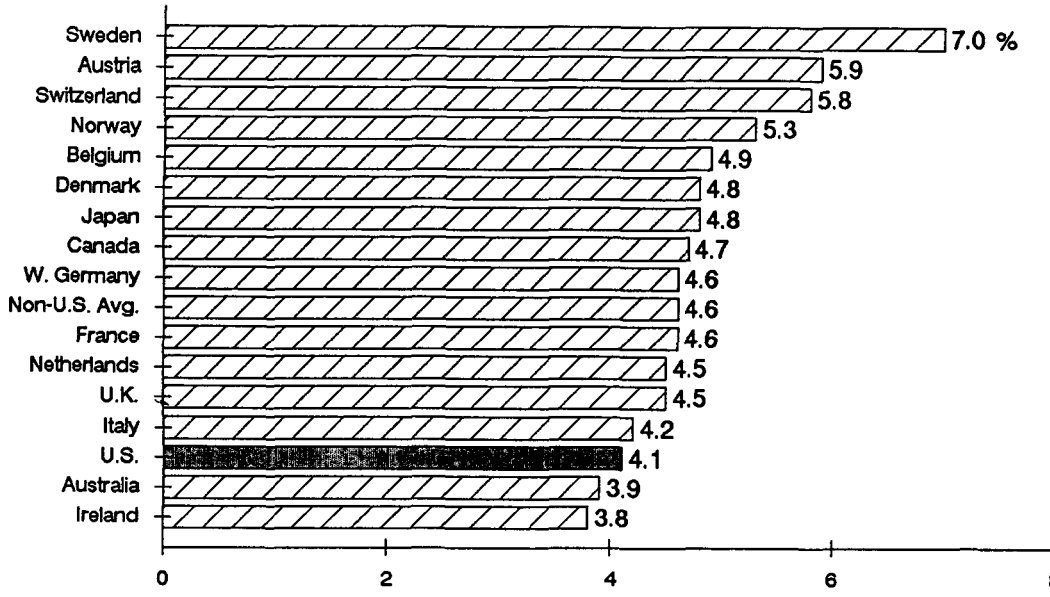

Spending on Grades K-12 as Percent of Gross Domestic Product

time, many of the items on school-reform agendas, such as raising teachers' salaries and extending the Head Start programs, will cost money. A constructive debate on education reform should not be artificially restricted by the Bush "no new resources" position that is based on misleading indicators of comparative education spending.

The Bush administration apparently believes it can bluster its way through the capital gains debate as well. There's no denying that most of the capital gains tax cut goes to the very well-off—some 80 percent going to those with incomes of $100,000 or more. So Bush is trying to focus on the jobs and investment generated by a capital gains tax break. Anyone questioning whether this tax break is beneficial is, according to Bush, a "demagogue."

Well, where would potential "demagogues" go to check the evidence for Bush's assertions about the benefits of capital gains tax reductions? In fact, there is nowhere to go, because neither the Council of Economic Advisors nor the Treasury Department has provided estimates of the amount of investment and jobs likely to be generated by a capital gains tax cut. This should not be surprising since the benefits, if any, are likely to be minuscule (apart from growth in the tax shelter industry). Much of the tax break will go toward existing investments and thus only provide a windfall only to "old capital" while generating no new jobs or investment. Even the effect on future investment will be small. Capital gains taxes are only a small portion of the "cost of capital," and lowering the "cost of capital" will have, at best, a modest effect on investment. In fact, there is no evidence that the recent loss of a capital gains tax break has adversely affected investment at all. Other ways of spending our public resources, such as education and training programs and infrastructure improvement, will yield far more jobs, investment and income.

The chief lobby for a capital gains tax reduction, the American Council for Capital Formation, even acknowledges the modest investment and job consequences. For instance, Mark Bloomfield, its spokesman, concedes that taxes are substantially less important than interest rates in determining the costs of capital. He even has acknowledged that "most of our [council] members don't care about capital gains. The significance of the capital gains debate is not the specific provision but what is said about tax policy." Oh, now we get it. The point is to reestablish the need to subsidize business investment bring back the investment tax credit and accelerated depreciation, and eliminate taxes on dividends. This will give the peace dividend to Corporate America.

Bush's "Let them eat rhetoric" approach is thus far a successful political recipe. An important ingredient of this recipe is the timidity of the political opposition (along with a corrupting political financial apparatus) and a somnolent press. □

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Paul Joseph

POLITICAL CHANGES AFTER THE COLD WAR

The Berlin Wall dismantled; religious ceremonies shown on Soviet television; the people of Romania overthrow Ceausescu; both Germanys announce plans to cut their armies by half over the next decade; European business plans to enter the huge new market. A new Europe . . .

These images reflect profound changes taking place in world politics. While critical questions surround the future of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, there is another set of questions in the background: the implications of these changes for American politics.

The cold war took the form of a dangerous nuclear arms race, very expensive preparations for a conventional war, and intervention in regional conflicts. Although the repressive nature of the communist regimes is understood by most in the West, the full impact of the cold war on politics in the United States, especially in foreign policy, is not yet fully appreciated. Since 1948, the debate over national security has been restricted to the following questions: By what diplomatic and military measures should we confront an enemy seen as expansionary? What is the best way to allocate a military budget higher than that of any other nation? Where and how should the United States use military force in the Third World? Should the Pentagon prepare to win a nuclear war or be content merely with a standoff at the level of thirty thousand warheads? This restricted debate has also contributed to the gradual weakening of the progressive impulse within the Democratic party. Now, with the removal of the "evil empire" and a growing recognition of the futility of nuclear weapons, the political agenda has become more open.

Just what are the implications of the transformation of Eastern Europe? For most commentators the answer is easy: capitalism has triumphed and a significant part of the world is now open to market forces that will secure political democracy. In his famous essay "The End of History," Francis Fukuyama argues that the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will culminate in a homogeneous world dominated by "economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands." Fukuyama sees a world without ideological competition, dominated by market forces and liberal democracies that do not go to war with each other. But this "end," he writes, "will be a very sad time." What will be lost is "the struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, [and] the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism . . . . In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history."

Let's pass over Fukuyama's nostalgia for the cold war and focus on what appears to be the victory of the capitalist economy. Superficially, he would seem to be right. The forces for political reform in the "East" all seem to recognize the need for some market incentives. Yet no one really can predict what will be the ultimate reaction of Eastern Europeans to "bottom line" practice. Some will prosper. Some more will probably enjoy slowly rising living standards. But there is another element as well. One aspect of living under the communist regimes has been the spread of an ethic, however ill-realized, in which society is supposed to provide at least some guarantees of security. What no one at this point can predict is the outcome when this ethic collides with "the logic of the marketplace."

There are indications from Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union that the replacement of state-command economies by market incentives is bringing with it corruption, profiteering, and worker disgruntlement in the short run, and the prospect of

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harder work for longer hours in the long run. In Poland, one can even detect a pattern: A European company proposes a project and defines the level of capital investment, wages, and degree of local control, the last usually minimal. The government agrees. The workers don't. Impasse. Enter Lech Walesa to negotiate a compromise. This can hardly remain the future basis of social organization. In the meantime, access to free health care, old-age pensions, and other forms of the social safety net is being eroded.

If capitalist-inspired austerity is the order of the day and Solidarity and other independent trade unions continue to defend workers' rights, then it is not at all clear what will happen. Some political forces will no doubt support the expansion of the market. But once the initial enthusiasm dies down, others may push for a balance of incentive structures and social responsibility. If one mixes in environmental concerns, it may be possible to work out a complex alliance between social-democratic and green tendencies in Scandinavia, Germany, and Italy with those reform groupings in Eastern Europe that remain leery of an indiscriminate adoption of the market.

This uncertainty helps to explain the thus-far slow reaction of U.S. business. European and even Japanese business and banks have taken steps to carve out a future role for themselves in Eastern Europe. U.S. business reluctance is due in part to anachronistic trade barriers, especially on high-technology products, that are only now being slowly dismantled. The geographic and cultural proximity of the West Europeans helps account for the different reaction. But business trepidation also reflects long-standing fears of investing in areas where the economic and political future remains uncertain.

Neither European nor American business has much interest in the development of a society combining economic vitality with concern for human community. A recent editorial in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a probusiness paper, warned against opposition groups in Eastern Europe whose political program was "to save socialism." West Germany, said the editorial, cannot be expected "to finance the experiment of a new variant of socialism." A diminished Soviet threat is bad news for Republicans, who have long relied on anticommunist rhetoric. The end of the cold war necessitates a new political and economic orientation. The cold war both served the international interests of the United States and helped provide for domestic tranquility. All of which explains the lament of Kevin Phillips, a political theorist for the Republican party: "We won the battle against the Soviet Union but we lost the battle for control of the 21st century economy. Republican politicians may soon be wishing that they were able to talk about Alger Hiss and the Soviet threat."

Are there sources of change within the United States that could, at the end of the cold war, resurrect a progressive agenda? One possible source is a remarkable shift in public opinion toward the Soviet Union and nuclear weapons policy. Perhaps more than at any other time in the postwar period, Americans are willing to entertain a new approach to national security. This new openness implies far more than registered support for reducing the defense budget and renewed commitment to social programs. Americans are now willing to cooperate with the Soviet Union on issues including nuclear arms control, AIDS research, combating terrorism and nuclear proliferation, and preserving the environment. Two-thirds support efforts to aid reform in the USSR. Gorbachev is popular and Americans want their government to help him. More than three-quarters of the public want Washington to take the lead in combating global warming. These attitudes are not being articulated by a popular leader, yet an imaginative presidential campaign could appeal to such embryonic sentiments for a program of "common security."

Public opinion, however, is "soft"—by itself it does not constitute a force for change. Americans are still woefully uninformed about international affairs, and subject to manipulation by politicians who command polling firms that devise ways to present traditional policies in acceptable form. Public opinion is thus two-sided, capable of supporting, if properly presented, a fundamentally new approach to security, yet passive toward and even supportive of military action, as in Panama. It is through the regional conflicts—ranging from support of the military alliance containing the infamous Khmer Rouge in Cambodia to the destructive intervention in Panama—that Washington is most actively trying to check incipient public support for an end to a militarized foreign policy.

The current situation regarding nuclear weapons policy is another potential source of change. Short of a catastrophic reversal of *perestroika*, we can expect a period of significant nuclear arms control regardless of who occupies the White House. Over the past

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twenty years, U.S. nuclear arms control proposals attempted to check the growth of Soviet land-based missiles while protecting those U.S. nuclear systems that bolstered the credibility of first use. The Soviets insisted upon negotiating on the principle of parity, something the United States was not willing to concede. The result was that the United States developed war-fighting systems and the Soviet Union tried to reply in kind.

Two developments have transformed this dangerous pattern. First, the Soviets seem to have concluded that conventional thinking regarding nuclear weapons—comparing different systems as if the nuclear balance represented some measurable military and political significance—is hopelessly outmoded. Instead of trying to negotiate strategic agreements based on parity, Moscow is trading off concessions in order to generate momentum for more arms control. In this way of thinking, it does not matter if the reductions appear "one-sided." As long as Moscow retains several hundred survival warheads for "minimal deterrence," all other nuclear systems can be subjected to a more flexible arms control.

In private, the more revisionist-minded civilian analysts at the Institute for USA and Canada, an

Markets and Democracy

Q. This brings me to the question of markets and democracy. There is a tendency in your argument to *equate* markets and democracy in a way that can be construed as close to the present argument of the right.

A. No. I am not particularly fond of the market. I am not a trader, and I have no particular love of traders. So it is not a question of my preference. I don't wish to glorify the market and far be it from me to speak of a perfect market or to defend typical Chicago theory based on perfect market competition, which has little to do with the real world. This is not the point. Market, like commodity production, follows from the separation of the units of production from each other on the one hand, so that their production cannot be for their own use only but for exchange and, on the other hand, from the fact that somehow the multifarious needs of society have to find some sort of expression through contractual relations, which I really cannot conceive of as taking place other than in the form of purchase and sale.

This is true even in the case of the imaginary, idealized commune. Assume that a hundred people form a commune, and within that commune there is perfect communism: they all share and share alike, and no money passes between them. Suppose that that commune produces anything you like, from books to eggs; it nonetheless requires for its functioning consumer goods and producer goods, it requires things that it must get from other people. There are two ways, and two ways only, in which they can get these things from other people: they can have them allocated to them by an administrative authority, or can just go and buy them.

Freedom in this sense for them to function requires, it seems to me, that they be able to go and buy them, except on one assumption, an assumption made by some Marxists and occasionally implied by Marx himself, that under socialism everything will be so plentiful that all they have to do is go to a common store and obtain them by simply bringing a large sack and taking them away with no money passing.

Now, if you can conceive of abundance in this sense, then of course you have a counterargument. If you don't and if you have what economists call opportunity costs—defined as a situation in which there are mutually exclusive alternatives—then *either* you must have purchase and sale, i.e., the market, production for the market, and links of a market type between producer and consumer, and between producer and producer; *or* you must have material allocations, you must have rationing of materials and rationings for the consumer so that their consumption is then limited by coupon. Limiting by coupon is unpopular, nobody likes it, so one is left with the damned market, you see.

It is the alternative to the market that dismays me: the alternative is more objectionable. And if somebody says that the market can get out of control, or leads to all kinds of distortions and therefore needs to be watched with care, I can only applaud that sentiment.

—From an interview with Alec Nove by Anders Stephenson in *Social Text*, Winter 1984–85. □

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influential Moscow think-tank, demonstrate an almost dismissive attitude toward technical calculations of the nuclear balance. They seem to feel that almost any reasonable proposal will be accepted if it loosens the arms control logjam and lowers the profile of the nuclear question in future U.S.-Soviet relations. Examples of this Soviet revisionism include the INF Treaty, which started from Reagan's original "zero-option" proposal; acceptance of onsite inspection to verify treaties; experiments to see how onsite inspection might work; an eighteen-month unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing; and a flexible attitude toward SDI research (although not on deployment).

The other development regarding the nuclear question concerns changes in the U.S. "strategic community." Liberals, moderates, and even many conservatives have virtually given up on the need for a nuclear counterforce in behalf of extended deterrence. That is a risky statement, and there are caveats one must quickly add. Several important weapons systems continue on their own inertia. Within the Pentagon, nuclear-war planners are proceeding much as in the past. And we cannot exclude the possibility that future reductions in nuclear arsenals might undermine stability. Yet the traditional "need" to pose a not-incredible nuclear first strike has almost disappeared. The reasons for this shift include the new stance of the Soviet Union and the changes in Europe that make a major war between East and West all but impossible. The slow diffusion of the critique of conventional nuclear thinking offered by the peace movement over the 1980s has played a role as well.

A lower profile for nuclear weapons in the calculations of both Washington and Moscow is a significant step, although by itself it will not bring about a genuine peace. Defenders of the status quo will continue to find "enemies" justifying a large military budget. Atomic weapons take up a relatively small part of that budget, so even a decade of nuclear arms control would not free up significant funds.

Only a revitalized social movement will be able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the next decade. To be successful, a popular effort to reduce the military budget by half must be linked with movements for social justice. Such movements must aim for an industrial policy whose goal is more than fostering competitiveness in a few high-tech industries. We must create decent, well-paying employment, counter the drift toward a polarized society, and address the reemergence of racial bigotry. Only then can we have peace.

Different social groups will continue to struggle over the answers. As long as they do, Fukuyama's prospect of a homogenized planet dominated by VCRs, health clubs, fashion, and do-it-yourself projects remains in the distant future, if ever at all. History is far from over. □

Brian Morton

AND JUST WHY DID WE INVADE PANAMA?

Does anyone remember why the United States invaded Panama? The day after the invasion, President Bush supplied his reasons. "The goals of the United States," he said, "have been to safeguard the lives of Americans, to defend democracy in Panama, to combat drug trafficking and to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal Treaty. . . . I directed our armed forces . . . to bring General Noriega to justice in the United States."

Let's take a look at these claims.

To safeguard the lives of Americans. A few days before the invasion, an American marine was killed by Panamanian soldiers, and another American serviceman and his wife were arrested and beaten. Horrible actions—but do they justify an invasion in which more than 500 people died? Alfred Rubin, professor of international law at Tufts University, commented that normal U.S. policy during similar occasions is to "restrict our personnel to the base areas until things can be worked out. I know of no other case in which we have seized on such an incident as a rationale for changing the government

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American soldiers in Panama during the U.S. invasion. Les Stone/IMPACT VISUALS

with which we should be negotiating. And we do negotiate with very unpleasant people and governments. . . ."

To defend democracy in Panama. The United States has supported military dictators in Panama since 1968—first General Omar Torrijos, who overthrew an elected government, and then General Manuel Noriega. Noriega was loathed in Panama, where his ouster was celebrated in the streets. But the politicians brought to power by the invasion—the winners of national elections last May that were brutally annulled by Noriega—have few illusions that the United States has suddenly become a champion of democracy in Panama. As Ricardo Arias Calderon, one of two new vice presidents, put it in 1986: "In all those years, they have known exactly what Noriega was doing. But now they are against him because they feel he is a source of instability rather than stability."

Guillermo Endara, the new president, was installed secretly, in the middle of the night, at a U.S. military base. Endara, who was notified of the invasion an hour before it began, later told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that the news was "like a kick in the head. It was not the best thing, I would have thought. We were not really consulted. . . . I would have been happier without an intervention."

To combat drug trafficking. The president's concern about Noriega's drug connections comes late in the day. An article in the *New Yorker* (January 8, 1990) provides background:

> In 1976, after two drug-enforcement officials had gone as far as to recommend that Noriega be assassinated to stop his drug dealing, George Bush, who was then the director of the CIA, met with Noriega personally and took no action to remove him from its rolls. In 1983, after Noriega had joined forces with the Medellin cocaine cartel and Bush had become Vice-President and the coordinator of the Reagan drug war, Bush and Noriega met again, and Noriega's CIA contract continued undisturbed.

Panama is a center of drug traffic because its banking laws invite money laundering, the process whereby illegal profits are deposited and then withdrawn as "clean money." With Noriega gone, will this change? According to the *New York Times*, President Endara "has for years been director of a . . . bank used extensively by Colombia's Medellin drug traffickers." The second vice president, Billy Ford, is part-owner of a bank that was named in a recent court case "as a central financial institution for one of the biggest Medellin launderers."

To protect the integrity of the canal. An agreement signed by the United States and Panama in 1977 states that the United States right to defend the canal "does not mean, nor shall it be interpreted

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as the right of intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Panama. Any United States action . . . shall never be directed against the territorial integrity or political independence of Panama."

And when was the canal ever threatened?

To bring Noriega to justice. Scholars of international law, normally a straitlaced tribe, treated this justification with amusement. Alfred Rubin said the arrest "was no more legal than if the Ayatollah Khomeini had ordered the seizure on British soil of the author Salman Rushdie to be brought to Iran on charges of blasphemy." A senior lawyer at the World Court said, "I can't think of any really good [precedents] unless you go back in history about 2,000 years ago. It was like the Romans leading back defeated leaders and taking them to the circus to be displayed."

International law stipulates that military force is permissible in self-defense and in the much more rare case of "humanitarian intervention." The claim of self-defense here is farfetched. As for humanitarian intervention, there are other countries that might qualify before Panama. As the *New Yorker* pointed out:

> [T]he uncomfortable truth is that, with the exception of Costa Rica (which does not have an army), Noriega's Panama had for years been the least violent and repressive member of Washington's Central American team. According to Amnesty International, Americas Watch, and the Organization of American States, Noriega's forces had been responsible for perhaps a dozen political killings from 1983 until the coup attempt last fall. In Honduras in the early eighties, just one military unit, the CIA-backed Battalion 3-16, was implicated in at least a hundred and forty-two death squad murders. The Nicaraguan Contras have murdered thousands, and more than seventy thousand civilians have perished at the hands of the American-trained Salvadoran Army since 1979. And in Guatemala, where in 1954 the CIA overthrew a democracy and put the military in power, the Army, funded and trained by Washington, has wiped out six hundred and sixty-two rural villages, and killed more than a hundred thousand civilians since 1978.

None of this should be taken as a defense of Noriega. He was a dictator, corrupt and brutal. But one can deplore the lawlessness of the dictator while deploring the lawlessness of the invasion.

If the official reasons for the invasion were hollow, what was the real reason? Some have suggested that it was an indirect thrust at the Sandinistas, who depended on Panama for banking and trade since the U.S. economic blockade. Others have said that it was an example of a new post–cold war policy, in which U.S. force will be used primarily in the Third World.

This kind of reasoning probably credits the administration with more sophistication than it has. A more plausible explanation was given by a White House adviser, who told the *New York Times* that the president "felt that Noriega was thumbing his nose at him."

Nineteen eighty-nine was the most remarkable year in modern history, a springtime of peoples, in which mass movements for democracy redrew the political map of the world. How sad that the United States had to close out the year with an act of old-fashioned thuggery. □

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Bogdan Denitch

REFORM AND CONFLICT IN YUGOSLAVIA

Yugoslavia entered on the long, crooked road to political and economic reforms as far back as 1948–50. Starting without previous signposts, the Yugoslav Communists have been on it for four decades; thus, their experiences and errors are relevant to both communist and noncommunist reformers. Many of the economic reforms proposed in other countries have been on the Yugoslav scene for decades. A number of solutions tried in Yugoslavia—workers' self-management, political decentralization, freedom of travel, and an openness to the world—have been attractive to reformers elsewhere. This, despite the fact that each "solution" raised new problems.

It is a mistake to assume, because of the more radical language used by East European reformers, that Yugoslav economic reforms are less far-reaching. To the contrary, long experience with the market, no matter how limited, gives the Yugoslavs some critical distance from this newly fashionable notion. The Yugoslav economic reforms launched at the end of 1989 by Premier Ante Markovic give every impression of being both less draconic and more successful than those in Poland. The Yugoslav currency has been made completely convertible; that is, Yugoslavs can legally purchase as many dollars, marks, francs or lire, as they can afford. The black market in currency is dead. Within less than a month more than $800 million was exchanged for the new "hard" Yugoslav dinar.

Whatever happens later, this bold surgical move against inflation was without precedent in communist-run economies. Wages have been frozen, in spite of objections from the trade unions. But they have been frozen in relation to the stable West German mark at approximately 370 marks a month. That is, wages are frozen *and* effectively indexed. Incidentally, that figure should be a warning to all who take East European statistics seriously. All except the Yugoslav wage, income, and GNP figures are usually stated in the grossly inaccurate official exchange rates of the local currency. Those figures should be divided by four to ten to get the real numbers. To be sure, certain prices are also absurdly out of line with those of other industrialized countries. Clearly if these economies are to move into the world market, their prices will have to approach those of Western Europe.

When that begins to happen, the critical question will be that of wages. Unless they are indexed, a major drop in living standards in already poor societies will take place even without inflation. The problem is that most East European economic reform proposals are based on keeping wages low and using that single "advantage" to attract foreign capital. This is a short-sighted policy because serious investors in Europe go into countries with high wages and strong unions—into West Germany, Sweden, and Holland, not into southern Italy, Greece, and Portugal. A low-wage policy will guarantee labor unrest and strong independent unions, which can expect help from their West European colleagues. Yugoslav unions are already showing increasing militancy and, unlike Solidarity in Poland are not trapped into taking responsibility for economic austerity. Their role is to see to it that austerity is equitably distributed.

But the Yugoslav economy, while troubled, is less of a problem than the political system and the relationships between republics and national groups. Yugoslavia has shown a growing trade surplus for three years in a row; it has reduced its large international debts from roughly $24 to $16 billion. It has more than $7.5 billion in reserves, giving it breathing space to absorb some of the inevitable pain

A fuller discussion of the prospects of Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe will be found in Limits and Possibilities: The Crisis of Yugoslav Socialism and State Socialist Systems, *by Bogdan Denitch, University of Minnesota Press, 1990.*

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of economic reforms and lessening its need for loans, that is, expensive money.

This is a strong performance in an area where the former star performer, Hungary, with less than 40 percent of the population of Yugoslavia, owes 50 percent more to international financial institutions. To be sure, the Yugoslav living standard has been falling or stagnating for five years, and there is considerable labor turbulence. Nevertheless the Yugoslav economy seems to have become a manageable problem, one in which change and improvement are possible. Alas, that is hardly the case for the East European regimes emerging from forty years of communist rule. Also, alas, the political situation in Yugoslavia is more problematic. Even there it is important to note the far-reaching political changes, with the League of Communists (the Yugoslav Communist party), or rather its reform wing, leading the way.

The key to economic reforms is to stop the party's constant political meddling in the economy. Above all, that means getting the party out of personnel decisions. The crudest form of meddling was the legal requirement, repealed only last year, that leading personnel in self-managed enterprises had to be "morally and politically suitable," that is, politically approved. Although the law is now off the books, it is still being applied in Serbia and Montenegro and the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. A massive purge of economic managers who did not enthusiastically support the president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, has taken place. All independent-minded Albanians have been purged in Kosovo. In the fall of 1989 the successful and popular director of one of the largest enterprises in Yugoslavia, Genex, was forced to resign.

The present Serbian leadership played reckless politics with the national economy throughout 1989. It did this in four ways. The first was through its continued insistence that a "correct" political line on Kosovo and Serbian national aspirations was essential for managers. Second was through the systematic use of xenophobic social demagoguery by which the responsibility for the economic and political difficulties is always blamed on others. The "others" are of course everybody else, the Slovenes, Croats, Albanians, and Bosnian Moslems, all apparently joining in exploitation of the long-suffering Serbs. That demagoguery makes hard economic decisions on the federal level more difficult and politically dangerous. Third, a virtual state of siege is maintained in the province of Kosovo. Since the hard-line nationalist Serbian leadership took over two years ago the situation in Kosovo—above all, Serbian-Albanian relations—has gotten worse. Lastly, the Serbian leadership has been attempting to destabilize the leaders of other republics, that is, to export its nationalist "anti-bureaucratic revolution."

The Serbian leadership, however, is increasingly isolated and on the defensive. Its boycott of Slovenia is boomeranging. The federal government of Ante Markovic was able to get an overwhelming majority in the parliament, including the necessary three quarters of the republics and provinces, to pass its economic program. This meant that all five republics, including underdeveloped Macedonia, Bosnia-Hersegovina, and Montenegro, voted for the program. This is a reflection of the increasing political isolation of the Serbian leadership even from traditional hard-line republics like Bosnia and Macedonia—one of the penalties for the reckless games that have been played with real and imagined Serbian nationalist grievances. To be sure, by voting against a stern federal anti-inflationary program the Serbian leadership positions itself to ambush the federal government in case the economic program runs into difficulties.

A positive development has been the victory of the democratic reform wing of the Croatian party at its Congress in fall 1989. The Croatian reform Communists now join the Slovenes in coming out unequivocally for a pluralist multiparty electoral system—legalizing rival parties and unions, removing any restrictions on freedom of speech and organization—and for free multiparty elections in spring 1990. That means that the Yugoslav federal parliament will be a multiparty body even if the acceptance of multiparty pluralism does not spread to other republics.

But it will spread, inevitably. By January 1990 formation of new political parties had been announced in Bosnia and even in Serbia. At their congress in December 1989 the Serbian Communists took an equivocal position: On one hand, they are not for a multiparty system, arguing that pluralism can develop in a one- (or rather a non) party system, which used to be the official line of the Yugoslav party as a whole. On the other hand, they will "not use administrative means" to block a development of other parties. In short they will have to be dragged kicking and screaming to multiparty democracy. That will delay the evolution of parliamentary pluralism, because it means that vast resources in money, media, and organization will continue to be used to give the Serbian Communists a major

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advantage over all others. Still, ending the direct administrative prohibition of other parties is a major step toward at least the kind of relationship that the PRI (Party of Revolutionary Institutions) in Mexico has with other parties. There are contests in Mexico, although often played with loaded dice.

Yugoslavia is thus evolving toward a democratic parliamentary state that will probably remain essentially socialist. Why socialist, at least in the West European social-democratic sense? Because while Yugoslavia will move toward an increasingly mixed economy, the mix will still be heavily tilted toward social ownership of one kind or another, and because reform communist and democratic socialist forces and smaller allied parties will dominate the elections for a considerable time to come. This is because the Yugoslav Communists did not have to be massively confronted by an opposition in order to enact democratic reforms and because, historically, the Yugoslav Communists were not an instrument of foreign domination. And also because a substantial section of Yugoslav opinion favors some kind of (better) self-managing socialism, one without a Communist monopoly of power and one that allows a significant space for private initiative. There are fewer utopian dreams about the market and, of course, fewer utopian dreams about self-managing socialism as the solution for all the ills of an industrial society.

The Yugoslav Communist party's fourteenth congress in January of 1990 turned out to be the last congress of a unified party. The foot dragging on democratic reforms by the large bloc of delegates from Serbia provoked a walkout by the Slovenian delegation. The congress aborted as delegations of other republics refused to continue meeting without the Slovenian reformers. A month later the Slovenian League of Communists declared formal independence from the League of Communists and agreed to face the voters in the spring elections as a democratic socialist party oriented to West European social democratic parties.

Because Yugoslavia is a federal state, the evolution toward a democratic political culture and institutions will by no means be even throughout the republics and provinces. In the United States, in many ways a much tighter federation than Yugoslavia, where states are not based on different national groups, there have historically been wide differences in the degree of respect for civil liberties, trade-union rights, clean elections, and political probity. Yugoslavia will be similar. There will be wide differences between the republics, and as far as democratic rights are concerned, within the republics between the urban and advanced counties and the backwoods ones. It will be possible to have a Yugoslavia, for example, where the Communists dominate in one republic, a coalition of democratic socialists and greens in another, and a coalition of non-socialist parties in a third. Provided that minimal democratic rules are agreed on—for example, that you cannot ban a party in one republic that is legal in another—and that individual rights have some protection from local and republic authorities—such a political system should be able to function. After all, that is not too different from the situation in the Federal Republic of Germany or Canada. □

Go to the Devil

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir recently told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that he would talk even to Satan if it would advance Mideast peace—but not to the PLO.

Responding to a question by Labor's Shevah Weiss, Shamir said he opposed talks with the PLO not because of that organization's terrorist record—but because it aims to establish a Palestinian state. The prime minister also said that the *intifada* wouldn't change Israel's position even if it continues for ten years—it has now entered its third.

Columnist Nahum Barnea asked a Shamir source: for argument's sake, if Shamir did talk to Satan, wouldn't Satan, by definition, seek the destruction of the state of Israel, as much if not more so than the PLO?

No, the source replied, Satan would push the transfer—or forced expulsion—of the Arabs from Israel and the territories, the solution embraced by the Jewish radical right.

Ah, Barnea surmised, it would be OUR Satan.

Jewish Frontier
Jan.-Feb. 1990

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Guillermo Ungo

EL SALVADOR: NO PEACE IN SIGHT

Photo by Marvin Collins /IMPACT VISUALS

Guillermo Ungo is general secretary of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) of El Salvador, a social democratic group. The interview below was conducted by Patrick Lacefield, national organizational director of Democratic Socialists of America.—EDS.

PL: Can you evaluate the current situation in El Salvador in the wake of the November offensive by the FMLN guerrillas?

GU: The situation has evolved slowly since then—with the good, the bad, and the ugly. After Cristiani's election as president last year, there was a tenuous coexistence. Some political space for the opposition remained. The repression by the security forces was on a selective basis, mainly targeting social forces that were closer to the FMLN rather than the political parties.

Our aim last year was to develop our own forces so as to avoid the "bonsai" strategy of the counterinsurgency. They want us not to grow, to exist simply as a beautiful little tree fit to decorate the garden of Cristiani and Bush. This way they can say, "See, we are a democracy. We have a center, a right, and a left." We were making progress but not fast enough.

PL: Then came the talks between the ARENA government and the FMLN rebels?

GU: The FMLN began talks with Cristiani mid-year and, in a way, it was easier for them to talk with Cristiani than it had been with Duarte. Why? Because he had the trust of the far right and the army. The latter knew Cristiani wasn't going to sell them out. Of course, that also makes it harder to talk about the structural changes necessary. Both sides needed talks. Both sides were not, however, equally serious. The hard-line sectors of the government and the military—the majority influence—thought that they could buy time. They assumed the supposed military weakness of the FMLN, and the geopolitical changes affecting the United States and the Soviet Union meant that the FMLN would grow weaker.

The FMLN, realizing the limitations of time, gave concessions—agreeing to lay down their arms and incorporate themselves into the prevailing system if there were a profound democratization process. They gave up the idea of merging the two armies and spoke of reforms to the current constitution. They proposed to put any reforms to a vote of the whole people.

Cristiani needed talks so as to improve his image—internationally more than internally. So, in Mexico, the hard-liners gave a little. You don't have to lay down your arms, they said. Just stop shooting; then we can discuss everything. Some procedural agreements were reached and it was something of a suc-

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cess for the FMLN because they appeared open, flexible, and substantive.

In the second round, held in August in Costa Rica, not much was achieved. I think the FMLN got disappointed much too quickly. The government wanted to go slow, the FMLN to go fast—each for tactical reasons. The government wanted private talks, the FMLN open talks. Also, the FMLN became disappointed because they had reduced the intensity of the warfare, declaring a unilateral cease-fire for ten days. They said, "Well, we are going to test the army. We won't place mines and booby traps, won't sabotage electric poles or declare transportation stoppages." But the army didn't give back anything. Just the opposite. There was little pressure internationally on Cristiani from people like ex-President Arias of Costa Rica. He just continued to urge the rebels to cease fire and lay down their arms. The FMLN cease-fire was not well understood politically. The government took advantage in order to attack the rear guard of the FMLN and claim to control the whole country. They didn't even lift the siege of the National University.

Then came the FENASTRAS bombing, the October 30 bombing of a left-wing union, which killed eleven people. The FMLN suspended the next round of talks, due to take place in Venezuela. We believed that this was a big mistake. Really, we had seen talks without negotiations. Now we didn't have talks, we didn't have negotiations.

The guerrillas had been preparing for the offensive for a long time. It's natural. You are waging war, you have contingency plans. They had put these plans aside for a while because they were satisfied with the talks. They had hopes. When they saw that the other side was taking advantage without being serious, they decided to launch a general military offensive. It was launched because of strength and weakness. Their strength was that they had accumulated weapons and people, trained people, gathered intelligence. They thought: The other side only understands strength. We have to use military means. They acted out of weakness because they believed that time was running out—what with the retreat of Soviet power, the fragile situation in Nicaragua, and the balance of forces in the region.

I think that they were playing different bets. They thought that they could combine insurrection with a military blow in order to knock the army down. Not knock it out but knock it down. We'll bleed the other guy to convince him that he has to negotiate.

PL: So some in the FMLN thought that this offensive would touch off an insurrection?

GU: I believe so. When they talked to us, no, because they knew we were skeptical. We heard this from the neighborhoods. There were lots of parties—birthday parties, baptisms, other meetings where people had an excuse to come together. Now the army is asking, "Who had parties in their homes before the offensive?" in order to hunt down sympathizers.

PL: Was there popular support in the poorer neighborhoods for an insurrection?

GU: I don't know, really. Everybody has this idea that an insurrection is a whole people rising up—Hollywood-style. That wasn't even true in Nicaragua. You need twenty families in a given neighborhood. It's all relative. My guess is that they had two or three families instead of twenty.

They wanted to bleed the army and stay in positions in the capital for some time. They achieved that. They wanted a cease-fire in place and the political recognition that came with it. This they didn't get. So it was a mixed bag. They bled the army but were also bled themselves.

Now, for the first time, Cristiani is saying that he cannot govern the country. He talks about the low world price of coffee and the failure of what was expected to be a bumper crop in the east of the country. Then there is the damage done by the offensive and the cost of the war. What comes out in the end is that both armies are strong in defensive terms. The FMLN has an advantage in offensive terms.

PL: And what is the situation for the Salvadoran democratic left in these troubled times?

GU: We have lost political space, and it's not easy to recover that. The repression in the wake of the offensive was harsh. Now, things have eased a little. Still, we have to evaluate our chances of operating within the country. We are approaching a period where there will have to be a turn toward genuine negotiations or an escalation in the war and repression. There are signs of both things. We know that there is a rethinking of El Salvador in State Department circles. Salvador will again be at the center of the agenda. In many ways, we are back to square one—where we were in 1980, when General Haig drew the line and American aid was questioned, supervised, and conditioned—badly conditioned but nevertheless conditioned.

Democratization and human rights are at the center of the agenda. The army has to be restructured so that it can be trusted. The killing of the Jesuits put this right back on the agenda. In theory, there is a consensus on the "shopping list" of army officers who need to be retired. Bush's list, though, will be very limited—for the sake of

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appearances only. The one officer, Colonel Benavides, whom they've detained for the Jesuits' killing, represents only the tip of the tip of the iceberg.

The conservative sector, no matter their majority in the National Assembly and control of the executive, cannot impose a settlement. Even the Christian Democrats, when they were in power with the backing of the army and the United States, couldn't rule the country. The Christian Democrats are realizing that to build up a center-left, they need us as we need them.

The problem is that with [the ruling party] ARENA, we don't just have a conservative party. We have a fascist party. In the army, there are those with a "total war" mentality, a killing mentality. Every time we go to talks, they commit some new killing to undermine the talks. There will not be a military victory. Even the political leadership in the United States begins to understand this.

PL: What is the discussion within ARENA and the army about a negotiated settlement?

GU: This is always a question—about differences between "goods" and "bads" within ARENA and the army. Cristiani, they say, is good, D'Aubuisson bad. Well, they are soul mates. There are differences, but they don't seem to run too deep. If you talk to Cristiani about the death squads, he says that they exist because of the FMLN. You talk to [Guatemalan President] Cerezo or [his defense minister] Gramajo and they acknowledge how deeply rooted the death squads are in the Guatemalan and Salvadoran far right. You cannot cure a man if you do not realize that he is sick. Perhaps some differences are developing because of the talks. D'Aubuisson wants to give the FMLN only peanuts. Perhaps Cristiani wants to give more—but not much more. □

Gordon K. Haskell

DEMOCRATIC STIRRINGS IN BULGARIA

Bands of roughly dressed country folk were marching—or sliding—along the icy streets of Sofia with the Bulgarian tricolor in their hands. Their placards denounced the "decision of December 29," called for a general strike, and demanded a referendum on "the national question."

I was confused. I had flown into Sofia January 5 expecting to find the country gripped in a struggle to democratize the forty-five-year-old Stalinist dictatorship. Instead, thousands were demonstrating against the Bulgarian Communist party (BCP), not to demand more rapid democratization, but to denounce its central committee for reversing the 1984 policy requiring Muslim Turkish-speaking Bulgarians to Bulgarize their names, close their schools, and stop speaking Turkish in public.

The official line of the nationalists was that they were outraged, not by the decision itself but by the undemocratic way it had been reached. But their arguments and placards made it clear that they hadn't gone on strike in their home towns just to make a procedural point. They believed Turkey had incited three hundred thousand Bulgarian Muslims to cross the border last summer "for a vacation" because they intended to return on Turkish tanks and roll the Bulgarians back to the Balkan Mountains. Their dream? That their one and a half million "Turkish" fellow-citizens just vanish. How? No one says.

On January 6, the "Committee for Reconciliation" gathered about a hundred people to decide their policies. Most of the leaders of the United Democratic Forces (UDF), the oppositional alliance, were there. They sounded pretty desperate. A delegation which had just returned from the "Turkish" section of Bulgaria said the nationalist movement was being financed and incited by local BCP cadres as a way to lash back at their masters in Sofia whose "democratization" policies were placing in jeopardy their undisputed rule—in a word, their position as the ruling class of Bulgaria. The "national question" was not the only thing at stake!

The group decided to demand television time to tell their story; to petition the parliament for an

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investigation of what public resources were being used to support the nationalists; to do a dozen other things which seemed impossible, given their meager resources. But they are accustomed to working with little. They would call their own demonstration for Sunday, the 14th.

On Sunday the 14th a hundred and fifty thousand people crowded onto Sofia's old Cathedral Square, in the biggest voluntary demonstration in Bulgarian history. For three hours they stamped their feet in the freezing cold, listened to speeches denouncing forty-five years of totalitarian communist rule, thundered "Down With the BCP," "Resign, resign" (to their rump parliament), and *"Pod-Kre-Pa, Pod-Kre-Pa"* (their version of Poland's *Solidarnosc*). Their leaders flailed the nationalist demonstrations as inspired by die-hards in the BCP, and called for equal rights for *all* Bulgarians. "Unity, unity," the crowd responded. The opposition and the BCP leadership had found one issue on which they agreed. Bulgaria, like most other countries, will have to live with a diverse population. The nationalist tide had perhaps been turned.

Every Saturday the "Southern Park" is the opposition's forum. About three hundred people gather to discuss, plan, and organize. Two months after the BCP ousted Todor Zhivkov, its leader for thirty-five years, the opposition still had no hall, no offices, no newspaper. In the park, placards identify each group: Social Democrats, Radical Democrats, nonparty democrats, Republicans, Greens, Eko-Glasnost (environmentalists), Peasant Union, Independent Association for Human Rights, and biggest of all, *Podkrepa,* the independent federation of trade unions.

The UDF program: land to the tillers, a mixed, market-oriented economy, ecological protection of natural resources, and a "civilized, lawful, democratic, free, multiparty, pluralistic, ecologically sound society." Each party and organization within the UDF emphasizes its preferred aspects of the common program, and all recognize that once they have established their rights as an opposition, differences among them will come to the fore.

I quickly discovered my "street buddies" in the forum. As soon as they identified me as the "Amerikanski Korrespondent" I became a center of attention. Isn't it true that in the United States people have to adopt English names as a condition of naturalization? Don't I think that Reagan's hard-nosed policies are really what forced Gorbachev to institute *glasnost* and *perestroika*?

My street buddies' high opinion of Reagan is shared by every opposition leader I interviewed. They know absolutely nothing about the domestic consequences of Reaganism; they justify the attacks on Grenada and Panama—in short, they have swallowed the Republican line entirely. At first frustrated by their ignorance, I gradually realized that three factors have been at work: they have learned to reject everything they read or hear in the communist-controlled media; they are inclined to believe everything they hear on the BBC or Voice of America; they are, and always have been (since I was a boy there) inclined to believe that most people in America live the American Dream every day.

Everyone tells me that I shouldn't mistake Sofia's "beltway politics" as representative of the whole country. In the provinces, people are still half paralyzed by fear. The local BCP cadres have not reconciled themselves to the "new thinking." They continue to treat the local government, economy, and police as personal property. In Govedartsi, a little village high in the Rila mountains, I attend a meeting at which a hundred and fifty local folks hoot down a retired major general of the National Security, a personal friend of both the fallen dictator and the new premier. Only the insistence of the chairman (victim of a ten-year sentence for membership in a human rights organization) that they must act democratically makes it possible for the general to have his say. But I gather this isn't yet typical.

Everyone knows the basic problem is how to disestablish the BCP's power in all spheres of society, abolishing much of it as socially harmful, and distributing the rest through a democratic process. But people are growing impatient as the other East European countries make dramatic changes.

The tensions of the struggle are mounting. Left- and right-wing factions have formed in the BCP. Their convention in late January was so stormy that the whole cabinet resigned, announcing that only a broader government (including the opposition) can govern Bulgaria. The UDF was united against entering a coalition government, but I wouldn't care to predict how long all its groups will stand firm.

It will be a miracle if the opposition—emerging from five decades of repression, its leaders coming out of prison or exile, a whole younger generation with no experience in politics, groups, and movements with little opportunity to work together—can remain united. But as the great Bulgarian writer Ivan Vazov wrote of his country when it was emerging in the middle of the nineteenth century from five hundred years under the Ottoman yoke: "In just a few days—covertly, in stages—the nation matured—by several ages." It is happening before our very eyes in 1990. □

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Demonstrators in Prague showed support for Chinese students Henrik Saxgren/IMPACT VISUALS

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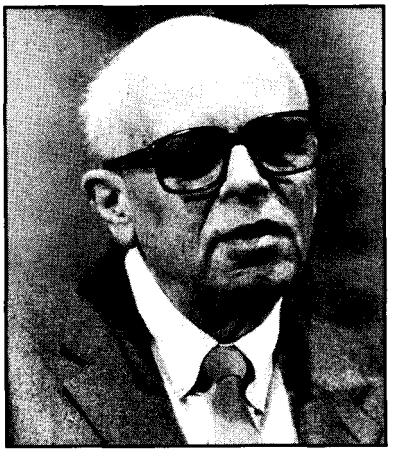
Reports, analyses, and controversies about the recent dramatic events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union



Dedicated to the memory of Andrei Sakharov, heroic battler for freedom

"A man may hope for nothing, yet must speak because he cannot remain silent."

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Michael Walzer

A CREDO FOR THIS MOMENT

Communism has given socialism a bad name. Years of tyranny and brutality, now brought to an end almost everywhere by popular rebellions, have colored, perhaps permanently, our view of state-run economies and enforced egalitarianism.

What has been called by some Western leftists "actually existing socialism" will now disappear from the political map.

Ironically, it is likely to be succeeded by one or another version of social democracy, which is the only socialism that has ever actually existed.

This is the socialism that I mean to describe here. Anticommunist and democratic, it has played a vital role in shaping the governments and societies of the West, though it has never been more than partially realized. Like any other creed subject to the vagaries of a free electorate, its programs have become matters of negotiation and compromise. Social democracy is *socialism revised* in the course of democratic political struggle.

The socialist creed can be summed up in three principles. First, that political society should be open and accessible to all. No one should be excluded from political participation, from democratic power-sharing, because of class, race, religion, or gender.

Second, that the economy should also be open and accessible to all its members. Economic power should be shared by the same people who share political power. This second principle by no means rules out market relations; it only rules out what might be called market imperialism—the conversion of private wealth into political influence and social privilege.

Third, that the members of political society and economy are collectively responsible for each other's welfare. Citizens and workers have claims, always partial, on the resources of the whole society.

The precise forms of political participation and of economic citizenship, the precise extent of welfare provision—these are matters still subject to democratic debate. Socialism doesn't imply a necessary commitment to any set of political or economic arrangements. In its social democratic version, it implies instead a commitment to experimentation, trial and error, institutional revision, and ideological openness.

But socialist principles do have a driving purpose, probably best understood in negative terms, which is not some simple and unqualified equality but rather the overcoming of all the gross and degrading forms of inequality.

I have described this as abolitionist politics: "No more bowing and scraping, fawning and toadying, no more fearful trembling, no more high-and-mightiness, no more masters, no more slaves."

There is also, of course, a positive program: the creation of a society of lively, energetic, active, competent people shaping their common life. But most socialists—intellectuals, militants, and politicians alike—have believed that the negative end, once realized, would bring the positive end in tow.

If people aren't active, energetic and so on, it is not because they are dull, or lazy, or incompetent, it is because they are oppressed. That may be wrong or, at any rate, too easy. Who knows? The whole of human history is a tale of hierarchy and subordination. Socialism, in the light of the ages, is a radically new idea. All its genealogies are inventions; there are no precedents—except, perhaps, within the movements and parties of the left.

The labor movement, the civil rights struggle, feminist politics, some socialist parties, some national liberation movements, the civic and democratic forums of Eastern Europe today—all have produced wonderful moments, rarely sustained, of nonhierarchical cooperation. Social democracy is the stubborn belief that these moments can be drawn out, given an ongoing institutional structure and some (imperfect) permanence.

The reason stubbornness is so necessary is well-known. Oscar Wilde stated it with elegant simplicity when he said that "socialism would take too many evenings." At the height of the struggle, people will go to all the necessary meetings, join in the exciting demonstrations. But even partial victory brings rapid demobilization and then the bureaucrats and the professionals take over.

So it has happened, again and again, in the all-too-brief history of democratic politics. Efforts to sustain the excitement are contrived, inauthentic, and, finally totalitarian.

But perhaps what socialism requires is only intermittent excitement: institutional arrangements that are always open to popular insurgency, rather than always engulfed by it. That also means it requires men and women who are sometime activists, always at the ready. The political and economic arrangements would have to be really democratic and the men and women would have to be self-respecting and roughly equal citizens. Hard enough, but not impossible.

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Mitchell Cohen

CREATING A NEW-OLD EUROPE

A First-Hand Report from Berlin & Budapest

Europe is today a new-old world. It is a continent in transitions that until recently were deemed inconceivable.

Cold warriors, confident in their rigid concepts, told us not long ago that a declining Western Europe, losing its backbone and faced with totalitarianism unchangeable from within, was being enfeebled, "Finlandized." But as the 1990s dawn, an ascending Western Europe moves toward integration and the communist bloc has imploded, with the Eastern European nations moving toward self-Finlandization. Still, our conservatives—neo, old, paleozoic—insist: "It's because we were so tough that what we knew couldn't possibly change from within, did change from within." They should recall a comment of Hungary's Stalinist Mátyás Rákosi at a politburo meeting: "Comrades, have we sunk so low as to be taken in by our own propaganda?"

I, for one, hope that the conservatives embrace the notions, beloved of Marxist-Leninists and liberal technocrats, that history and ideology end with them. Let them believe in their historical necessities; this is a moment for inventiveness. For history has its ends, not an end, and those ends we now witness are created by changing men and women in the changing circumstances we call history. "You can no longer predict the future by scientific or pseudoscientific means," the biologist Jens Reich, a founder of New Forum, the East German opposition movement, told me in Berlin at the year's end. "It just arrives."

I wish to express my gratitude to Nicole Fermon, Andrei S. Markovits and Vladimir Tismaneanu for comments on early versions of this article.

Though of course it didn't just arrive. The American media take its consumers on tours of Eastern Europe—one day Warsaw, the next Berlin, then Prague—leaving the sense that the same thing, more or less, happens in each place. The premise—that there was the One (Totalitarianism) overthrown by the One (Freedom, which equals "The Free Market")—demonstrates an inability to see these countries on their own grounds.

Of course, the East Europeans do share commonalities—geographical and historical proximity, the legacies of Soviet dominance. However, in Poland the Communist party was embattled by a mass workers' movement; in Hungary, faced with economic malaise, the party-state withered away; in Yugoslavia economic and nationalist crises tear at the country; the Czechoslovaks acclaim a playwright along with a former communist chief; in East Germany, upheaval is triggered by mass exit; in Romania, the orchestra strikes back violently at the Great *Conducator,* Ceausescu. One-party rule remade or destroyed aspects of national life in these diverse countries; others it froze or stunted.

Last summer a young liberal Budapest historian declared to me, only half facetiously, that she favored resurrecting the Austro-Hungarian empire. "Who needs these small nations quarreling with one another? Think of the past . . . ." Her words brought to mind a short story by Joseph Roth, the dual monarchy's elegiac novelist. In "The Emperor's Bust," a Polish noble of Italian origins living in the Eastern Galician province of Austria-

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Hungary watches wars, nationalism, and democracy undo his beloved empire, a realm of diversity under one crown, "a great mansion with many doors and many chambers, for every condition of men . . . a home, not cabins." Count Morstin fumes to a Jewish publican:

> This dreadful Darwin, who says men are descended from apes, seems to be right! It is no longer enough for people to be divided into races, far from it! They want to belong to particular nations. Nationalism; do you hear, Solomon? Even the apes never hit on an idea like that. Darwin's theory still seems incomplete. Perhaps the apes are descended from the nationalists since they are certainly a step forward. You know your Bible, Solomon, and you know that it is written there that on the sixth day God created man, not nationalist man. Isn't that so Solomon?

The Soviet bloc was no home, but rather a house with locked doors and windows. In the post-World War II division of the continent, a principle of post-Reformation Europe echoed: *cuius regio, eius religio*—whoever rules imposes his religion. The early application of this principle was in a prenationalist world, in soil cultivated for the transition from universal Christendom and feudalism to nation-states and capitalism. The mid-twentieth century application came subsequent to the nationalist age, one in which cultural-territorial communities defined themselves politically.

The Count Morstins and most Marxists, for differing but not entirely variant reasons, could find nothing intrinsically positive in such self-definition; nationalism's unhappy history yields evidence supporting their apprehensions. Where more so than in the center of Europe? Hence the fears of German unification.

True, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) has now had four decades of democratic government. True, unification, a new-old problem, will invert the process of a century ago; instead of Bismarck's Prussia annexing the rest of Germany, the latter will ingest the wreckage of Prusso-Stalinism. "The West German government has an enormous responsibility to avoid encouraging dangerous nationalist emotions," warns Wolfgang Uhllmann of Democracy Now, an East German network devoted to grass-roots democracy originating in the Protestant churches. Nationalist emotions have already appeared at demonstrations in Leipzig and Dresden, with banners for a united Reich, including parts of Poland; Jews in Erfurt have received anonymous threats ("The oven at Buchenwald is still waiting for you"); neo-Nazi skinheads have rioted in Leipzig; anti-Polish sentiments have intensified; West Germany's party of the extreme right—the "Republicans"—is actively seeking adherents in the East. Bonn's ruling Christian Democrats, facing national elections next fall, will be looking nervously over their right shoulder. Will Chancellor Kohl, known for obtuseness about World War II, refrain from exploiting nationalist sentiments?

East Germans call the dramatic events of last fall *"die Wende"*—the turning—and they pun on the relation between *die Wende* and *die Wände*—walls. Now that *die Wände* and the Berlin Wall no longer pose the same physical and psychological barriers, the real question, as novelist Stefan Heym told me, "is unification when and under what conditions, and what kind of Germany it will be." The justification for an independent German Democratic Republic (GDR) rested on its "socialist" nature. But even the Socialist Unity party (SED)—the GDR's Communists—is resigned to some type of unification with the West.

Die Wende was a turning away from the SED, even though the party sought to salvage itself with a new name—the "Party of Democratic Socialism"—and new leaders. Gregor Gysi, its new chief, is a lawyer unsoiled by the Honecker era; he was defense attorney for leading dissidents. Gysi's accession was actually a coup by party intellectuals, an SED journalist, Hannes Bahrmann, told me. "Of all the parties in the country, mine has the best leader, the best program, and the worst membership."

In a party-state one joins the party either for ideological or careerist reasons; with pluralism, the SED began to unravel. The fate of Hungarian Communists is similar. After a protracted struggle reformers won control of the Hungarian Socialist Workers party (Communist) last fall, changed its name to the Socialist party, and nominated a popular radical, Imre Pozsgay, as its presidential candidate. Since then Pozsgay's star, and his

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party's, have plummeted. "We overran the fortress and discovered that there was nothing behind it," says András Kereszty, a reformist editor of *Népszabadság* (once the party daily, now a public stock company). History may record party reformers as the Kerenskys of East European communism. A comedian declared on East German television: "Gregor Gysi used to be a lawyer, now he's unskilled labor."

Many East Berlin intellectuals who fought the Communist regime retain substantial left-wing idealism. The new East German Social Democratic party refuses to cede Rosa Luxemburg to the SED; the first issue of the Social Democrats' paper carried a celebrated quote by her on its front page: "Freedom is always freedom for those who think differently."

The New Forum's Jens Reich, on the other hand, says that "everything has been called 'socialist' from the greatest dreams of mankind to the most brutal dictatorship." When Reich and his colleagues edited their movement's program they tried "to avoid using the worn-out phrases, but rather described what we wanted, which is still in many ways represented in the socialist idea."

The New Forum declares that it didn't fight the Communist "plan dictatorship" to have it replaced by "market dictatorship." At the same time, a cleavage opened; while intellectuals continued to speak a left-wing language, the nationalist imperative, frequently indistinguishable from an economic one, seems to have led everyone else to clamor not for a democratized socialism, but for a unified Germany. There is also a territorial rift; nationalist sentiments are more forceful in the south, especially Leipzig, cradle of the anti-Honecker protests, than in Berlin.

It is a commonplace that traditional German political culture is not democratic. The FRG (West Germany) may have had forty years of political democracy to counteract this, but the GDR (East Germany) had Prusso-Stalinism. The church, in particular the Evangelical church, with eight million members out of a GDR population of sixteen million, was the only institution not under state dominance, serving as a shelter for democratic oppositionists, though often uneasy in this role. "The majority of our population is still in a predemocratic situation," says Democracy Now's Uhllmann, a teacher of church history. "There is a deep gap between a small group like ours—theologians, teachers, artists—and our people, without a democratic experience. The church was the only place in which democratic procedures took place—in synods and church groups."

A mélange of groups promoting antimilitarism, human rights, and ecology had emerged in the GDR even before New Forum's birth and the mobilizations of last autumn. These groups emphasized grass-roots activism. Among some there was an aversion to party politics—understandable given the record of what was, for so long, the only party in town. But this also led to tensions with newly constituted parties, such as Democratic Awakening—initially with an array of political views but now representing the center-right—and the Social Democrats.

The latter first presented themselves as an East German party, but now champions "unification—not reunification," in the words of Konrad Elmer, a pastor who sits on the party's executive. After World War II, East German Social Democrats were forced to merge with the Communists in the Socialist Unity party. Now, the reborn SPD is the child of new faces, in particular party secretary Ibrahim Böhme, a one-time SED member jailed in the 1970s for his "incorrect" behavior, and three Lutheran pastors who came together in a study group devoted to Hegel.

These "conspirators" began meeting secretly in spring 1989, months before Honecker's fall. October 7—the GDR's fortieth anniversary—was chosen as the date of the party's refounding. Gorbachev would be in Berlin; hopefully the Stasi (political police) would be preoccupied. Nonetheless, on that morning, as Elmer drove from his home, he found that he had company to lose—a car with three imposing gentlemen—before making his way to a village near Berlin. There forty signatures were affixed to the party's founding document, which identified with "the traditions of the democratic socialism of European Socialists and Social Democrats" and called for an "ecologically-oriented market economy with democratic control of economic power." "We

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thought we'd all be arrested the next day," says Elmer. But Honecker's days were numbered and the Social Democrats emerged publicly. With elections on the horizon, West German Social Democrats moved quickly to aid them.

Nobody in either West Germany or East Germany was prepared for the speed at which the *ancien régime* fell and demands for unification intensified. The new political environment brings together economic crisis and pressures from a population desirous of fast change in the belief that the national question and higher living standards are linked. A measured process of unification is one thing; but responding to a general collapse of the GDR's economy—a real prospect with three thousand people emigrating daily—raises the possibility of volatile scenarios. In any event, unification is a complex matter, both because of the economic demands it will make on West Germany and because the two Germanys are still members of different military alliances.

History tells us that economic well-being tempers German nationalism. Germany's neighbors know this, but they also fear the political and economic strength that will come of its unification. Yet as the *Economist* pointed out, unification will not "make" Germany the dominant economic power in Europe—West Germany alone is already that. Will unification be a German event per se, or linked tightly to European integration? If Europe successfully moves from the traditional nation-state system and becomes, by means of the European Community, more like Count Morstin's vision of Austria-Hungary—minus the monarchy, and with a common market keeping locks off the mansion's doors—German unification takes on a different context.

Still, economic and political power creates its own realities. In recent years, the somewhat amorphous idea of "Central Europe" was revived in West Germany and among dissidents in several Warsaw Pact countries—nations that will increasingly turn to West Germany for aid and investment. For many Germans, the notion of a Central European identity implies a new weight for themselves in a reshaped continent; for Czechoslovaks and Hungarians it has partly been a vehicle to distance themselves from the Soviets. Where does "Central" Europe end and "Eastern" Europe begin? What "Central Europeanness" might mean in a post-cold war age with a unified Germany is unclear. "The more inoffensive they try to seem," Günter Grass once wrote of his compatriots, "the greater the dread they inspire in their neighbors." What happens when they cannot avoid being at center stage?

And what problems are posed by nationalism in the smaller Central European countries? The question is appropriate inasmuch as the history of nationalism in the region has very unhappy chapters; it's also unfair because, after forty years of Moscow's dictates, these nations have a right to their own lives.

One should not mistake a legitimate desire for reconstituting a sense of national self with rabid nationalism. "The Hungarians were perhaps once too proud of their past," remarks historian Géza Jeszenszky, dean at Budapest's Karl Marx University of Economics and head of the foreign affairs committee of the center-right Hungarian Democratic Forum (DF). "Under the Communists it was the reverse." The DF, founded by populist writers in 1987, has emerged as one of Hungary's major parties; the country intelligentsia forms its backbone, and a mixture of centrist-conservatives and nationalist-populists its leadership. Sentiments like Jeszenszky's are expressed by Enikö Bollobás, professor at Attila Jozsef University in Szeged, in southern Hungary, when describing her own education during the Kádár years: "In history classes I was not allowed to speak in the first person plural."

Consider, though, two other comments she made in the same conversation: "Hungarianness is Central Europeanness"; "The future culture [of Hungary] should be as European as Hungarian." A central factor shaping the new-old Central Europeans will be the interplay among these three categories. For the moment, there is an auspicious constellation. The long parallel struggles against one-party rule in neighboring countries has produced a sense of fellowship among former dissidents, some of whom are now in power. In Hungary,

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a major source of national ferment was calmed with the overthrow of Ceausescu, the "genius of the Carpathians." The mistreatment of Romania's Hungarian minority in Transylvania was not only a rallying cry for more radical nationalist elements in Hungary, but a justified concern for virtually all Hungarians. The Romanian drama this past winter produced a moment of euphoria in Hungary, a country whose paced exit from Communist rule lacked the mass catharsis experienced elsewhere in the region.

With European integration the word of the hour, with the USSR withdrawing its troops, with Ceausescu gone, with neighboring Czechoslovakia headed by Havel and with a friendly (and rich) Austria to the west, old feelings of Hungarian isolation, which can lend themselves to a dangerous nationalism, are defused. At least for now.

The DF embodies the dilemmas of conservatives and nationalists in post-communist societies. As philosopher Sándor Radnóti observes, "The question is whether they consider the last forty years a great historical hole and want to look backward, or recognize that what happened was a modernization—a wrong modernization but modernization nonetheless—and that one cannot go back, but must find a modern path."

Although the DF was initiated by populist writers, centrist-conservative nationalists—Christian Democrats of sorts—have stepped to the fore. Historian Joszef Antall, the DF's leader, and Jeszenszky fit this mold; the latter speaks of the need to direct nationalism into "proper channels." Jeszenszky rejects the "populist" appellation. "I'm not nostalgic and don't want to see a return to the old society; what was good in the old rural society is gone."

The heyday of Magyar populism was in the 1930s when the Hungarian countryside was dominated by great estates and the government by the authoritarian Miklós Horthy. Writers preoccupied with the peasantry advocated an alliance between it and themselves on the basis of a mélange of ideas—some left-wing, some extreme right-wing, some promoting a "third way" distinct from the capitalist West and communist East. This populism was frequently

informed by chauvinism and anti-Semitism, aimed especially at urban (meaning Budapest), Western-oriented Jewish intellectuals and the Jewish middle classes.

When I visited Budapest in January, I found DF intellectuals angrily denying Western press reports that their party harbored anti-Semitism. One DF chapter is suing the president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for comments quoted by David Shipler in the *New Yorker*. Referring to its populist-nationalists, Iván T. Berend, a Jew and former member of the Communist party's central committee, declared anti-Semitism "strong in the Democratic Forum, although they are very cautious in expressing it. . . . They are counting Jews in leading positions, they are counting Jews in the mass media, and are saying they are destroying Hungarian culture. They use the word 'cosmopolitan.' "

One cause of friction is the DF's uneasy relation with its chief competitor, the Alliance of Free Democrats (or SDS, according to Hungarian initials). The SDS is Budapest-anchored and many of its prominent figures are Jews. Last fall the two parties took opposing sides on a national referendum concerning presidential elections, and one slogan within

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DF ranks was that "whoever was Hungarian" supported them.

Virtually every SDS leader I spoke with, including its most prominent figure, author György Konrád, urged that the issue of anti-Semitism not be exaggerated. The most forceful comments on the subject—and on the DF's attitudes toward the Gypsy minority and women's issues (the DF opposes abortion rights)—came from Social Democratic leader Anna Petrasovits, who dismisses DF denials of prejudice as simply "not convincing."

The name I most often heard linked to allegations of anti-Semitism was that of a famous figure in the DF, the writer István Csurka. Jeszenszky insists that Csurka "does not represent the Forum," but adds that he is an electoral asset because he can speak "to workers and the average man, which many Forum intellectuals cannot do." When I met Csurka one evening at the ornate Hungaria cafe, he declared himself "proud to be a populist and a nationalist." What does this mean, I asked, given that Hungarian populism was born of a peasant universe now all but gone? "Sixty years ago populists were against the aristocracy, which owned most of the land. After 1945, the redivision of the land didn't make life better for the peasants. To be a populist means to follow this movement and to be attached to the peasants." It was, he added, tied to finding a "third way" for the country and to maintaining Hungarian identity, including among Hungarians outside the country, especially in Transylvania, "the cradle of Hungarian culture."

Does this imply revising the 1919 Treaty of Trianon, in which Hungary lost two thirds of its territory to its neighbors? "At the present time it's unrealistic." And in the future? "I want rights for Hungarians abroad and to promote interaction between Hungarians inside and outside our borders. It's a question of culture." Noting that Hungarians now compose a quarter of Transylvania's population, he added that "The question is not where Transylvania came from; it's a matter of democracy, of allowing people to live according to their nationality."

I suggested to Csurka that the Democratic Forum's use of a rallying cry like "Whoever is Hungarian is with us" is unwise in a country struggling to consolidate democratic pluralism: it implies that only one party legitimately represents "the nation." The slogan, he told me, derived from 1956, when Hungary's freedom fighters, facing Soviet tanks, declared all Hungarians to be with them. But, I interjected, doesn't that make Russian invaders out of your democratic opponents? "We tried to use the slogan in a positive sense, not an exclusionary one," he responded. This is "a qualitative question, not a blood question."

And the Jewish question? Csurka declared to Shipler that before World War II, "Hungary's capital was in the hands of the Jews. . . ." Discussing his celebrated feud in the 1970s with Hungary's cultural dictator, Csurka told Shipler, "It cannot be denied that there was a special group of party leaders, represented by György Aczél. As a Jew he collected around him Jewish people in the leadership in the Kádár era, and they were people playing significant roles in the society. . . .They were in power in the press, television, radio, but not so much in politics." Berend, Csurka told me, was "in the stable of Aczél." But he insisted that his problem with Aczél was "because he is a Communist, not because he is a Jew."

But then he chose to point out "a few facts" to me. "It is a historical fact that Hungary's Stalinists—Rákosi, Gerő, Farkas, Gábor Péter—were Jews." When asked why so many Stalinists were Jews, Csurka shrugged: "It just happened after World War II and it just happened after World War I [in the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919]. It is a fact, but that is no reason for anti-Semitism. Honorable Jews also suffered from the Communists."

Shorthly after I spoke to Csurka, he warned Hungarians on radio of the dangers posed to them by a "dwarf minority."

Anti-Semitism is a real, though not central, issue in Hungary today. The Democratic Forum recently issued an "Appeal to the New Democratic Organizations in Central and Eastern Europe" that asserts that a "cardinal prerequisite of democracy is toleration for those whose political views, religion or language differs . . . ." Well and good; but one wonders why Berend's comments produce a lawsuit while Csurka's—let's understate—engender defensiveness. Here, then, a "fact:"

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nationalists, particularly those of a victimized people, have a difficult time confronting the underside of their own aspirations.

Hungary faces a difficult path ahead, especially as plans for austerity, marketization, and privatization move ahead. The SDS advocates the most radical measures in this regard—measures likely to bring social distress that could generate a mood of nationalist and populist demagogy. These same dangers can imperil a new democratic political system and undermine amiable relations among the region's nations.

Competition for foreign assistance, resentments stirred by dislocations accompanying economic change, and the possibility of what Bogdan Denitch calls the "Mexicanization" of the region—its relation to the West might come to resemble that between the U.S. and its southern neighbor—could all yield political volatility. The International Monetary Fund might have to decide if its notions of economic efficiency have priority over the survival of new democracies. There is, after all, a neat Marxist explanation of the collapse of Communist regimes in the last year: the base undid the superstructure.

"You Americans come from a country in which socioeconomic problems are significantly a result of the market," notes Hungarian economic historian István Rev. "We live in a country in which our difficulties come from the opposite problem." In the Warsaw Pact countries, the average annual growth rate was 10 percent in the 1950s, but only 1.7 percent and .77 percent for the GDR and Hungary, respectively, in 1989. Today's deep foreign debt and domestic malaise derive from sources internal and external to the structures of the economies. One important factor: having conceived modernization on the Stalinist model of heavy industry, Communist regimes proved incapable of adapting to the technological revolutions of the last two decades. You might say that relations of production became fetters on productive development.

A suggestive model with which to explain Eastern Europe's trauma was developed—before last year's events—by sociologist Ivan Szelényi. He emphasizes the difficulties of transition between stages of "extensive" and "intensive" economic growth. The former encompasses the era of dynamic industrialization—the production of what Marx called constant capital, the means of production—in Eastern Europe from the late 1940s through the ensuing quarter century. Once this was accomplished, and once surplus agricultural populations had been transformed into proletarians, command economies were unable to transform themselves into productive, consumer-oriented systems capable of responding to scientific and technological advances and popular needs. Whereas the central planning of the first stage requires "a few thousand agents . . . now it has to predict and influence the behavior of millions or hundreds of millions of consumers." It simply cannot do that. A metamorphosis was required parallel to that which occurred in Western capitalism after its "extensive" period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ended in structural crisis—the Great Depression. The transition to intensive growth was accomplished by Keynesianism and the displacement of laissez-faire by the welfare state, giving birth to Western consumer society.[1]

The GDR and Hungary pursued two different responses to this crisis of transition. The GDR sought to rationalize its command structure in the 1970s by streamlining enterprises into cartels. These 132 *Kombinaten* were to make planning and direction more efficient. The GDR's economy did function measurably better than the other COMECON countries, but by the late 1980s it slowed down, with its official successes in part based on doctored statistics.

"The main problem with our entire system," argues Michael Brie, a professor at East Berlin's Humboldt University active in reform circles of the SED, "is that it worked against innovation in the economy." Among objections to command economies leveled by advocates of both capitalism and market socialism is the impossibility of devising a rational scheme encompassing every nut and bolt in increasingly complex societies. The obsessions of the totalitarian mentality add an interesting wrinkle. Not only did the East German regime give

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false public statistics, but many of its own economists didn't receive accurate information. "Imagine," exclaims Dieter Klein, vice chancellor of Humboldt University, "I as an economist didn't know our actual level of debt—$20 billion. We were told $9 billion." Here, then, a contradiction of Stalinism: a regime claiming to plan everything "rationally" from top down, but unwilling to give its own economists genuine data, must nurture its own economic crises.

Combine a command economy with an undemocratic political system and you create conditions for reckless borrowing should the regime come upon hard times. Both the GDR and Hungary have serious debt crises because their governments sought to sustain themselves through credits and loans—often provided by reckless (but, of course, never blamed) Western lenders. Such was one factor in Honecker's "economic miracle," though the GDR's special relation with West Germany is also important. As for the "goulash communism" of Kádár's Hungary, it was an attempt to buy public quiet by a politically illegitimate regime. "As a result," notes István Rev, "once there was a crisis, the optical illusion that there was a consensus was undermined." Meanwhile, Hungary's debt is $20 billion.

There was also an ingredient beyond the control of these states—the energy crisis. The GDR and Hungary obtain, respectively, 93 percent and 90 percent of their oil from the Russians. Moscow's price rises were more gradual than the ones of skyrocketing OPEC in the 1970s, but between 1973 and 1979 the GDR had to treble exports to the Soviet Union in return for the same quantity of oil. In 1974, 800 Hungarian Ikarus buses brought home one million tons of oil but in 1986 it took 4,500.[2] All the while, Western credit and petrodollars were readily obtainable. Yet when the West began to recover from its OPEC-induced tribulations, the East was suffering the full brunt of its energy crunch. By then Soviet subsidies declined and Western credits became increasingly expensive.

Hungary's strategic response to the problem of transition to intensive growth was embodied in the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) reform of 1968–74, and subsequent reforms of the late 1970s. These introduced significant market elements and decentralized decision-making, and permitted the growth of a "second"—non-state controlled—economic sector. This attempt to have both planning and a market was partly thwarted by politics, that is, by party and state vested interests. At the same time, Hungarian economist János Kornai argues that the "vertical" bureaucratic coordination of the economy—that is, the planning that remained intact—prevailed over the "horizontal" market coordination of buyers and sellers. "The idea behind NEM was that you could have a market system but not complete market dominance," and this failed, says Budapest reform economist Martón Tardos. He concludes that market socialism is dead "if it means something different from Sweden or Austria, which Hungary can't afford right now."

It seems that the transition from laissez-faire to moderate state intervention in the West now finds a mirror image in the East, a shift from planning toward markets.

There is a consensus across most of the Hungarian political spectrum that the country's economy must be significantly deregulated and privatized, with subsidies to unprofitable enterprises reduced or cut. However, the word "market" has taken on an almost magical character among some politicians, much as "plan" once did for communists. Gains and losses from the process of economic transformation are already an issue in Eastern Europe. Stefan Heym fears "carpetbaggers" descending on the GDR; in Hungary they will find nomenklatura allies. It's done something like this: a foreign investor wishing to buy a state-owned enterprise makes a convenient arrangement with its nomenklatura managers. The latter provide manipulated data—drastically underestimating the firm's assets—to accountants who then "estimate" its worth. The investor obtains an enterprise at a cut-rate price, and the managers are guaranteed their positions or an attractive severance. And the workers? They are supposed to get . . . the long-term fruits of privatization in a country which as yet has no serious program of unemployment relief and in which most workers have no savings.

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"This is a revolutionary period without imagination," worries sociologist Mihály Vajda. In Budapest I asked virtually every political figure I met the same question: "Imagine I'm a simple worker. Tell my why I should accept your marketizing policies when they are likely to cause me much grief—inflation, possible unemployment, social dislocation? You intellectuals may have free speech now, but I must feed my family." The answer was invariably that short-term difficulties must be suffered for the sake of long-term economic health. (Ironically, this is just what communist regimes told workers.) SDS's János Kis, who calls himself a "social liberal," has a somewhat stoic response: "Inflation and unemployment are going to happen anyway. It is a function of budgetary restraints. The government cannot sustain unprofitable enterprises anymore. I have no a priori answer to the question of what to tell the workers in this situation. If the necessary measures had been taken in 1980, when the debt was much smaller, there would have been less of a problem."

Here is where a dangerous political space may open—say, for nationalist-populist demagogy. And here, too, is where the question of workers' organizations becomes important. Under communist regimes, trade unions were generally "transmission belts" for the policies of the ruling party. In Hungary, they are among the most unpopular institutions and their leadership is still largely of the communist—and not necessarily reform—mold. Until now, "the strength of the official unions lies in the passivity of the workers," says László Bruszt, national secretary of the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions (the TDDSZ), a two-year-old effort. Instead of facing the problems of the country, the official union leadership is repeatedly guilty of "social demagogy," complains Bruszt. "Typical of them was their agreement in December 1988 to a 5 percent decrease in the workers' real wages, only to call for a 'warning strike' when some prices went up the next summer." There is a danger that the legitimate struggles of workers could be hijacked by the *ancien* trade union *régime* in difficult economic times. The TDDSZ's 16 unions still have but moderate strength; their 45,000 members are mostly in the service and tertiary sectors, although the blue-collar constituency is growing, according to Bruszt.

The problems of economic change color the differences among the Hungarian parties. The SDS's thinking appears to be dominated by a neoliberal radicalism inclined toward shock therapy for the economy in the form of rapid privatization, a quick introduction of market forces, and a fast opening for foreign investors. It leans consequently to a weaker state role in economic life.

"An important aspect of SDS thinking," comments Rev, "is also the recognition of a long-term problem. Because the Kádár regime was relatively liberal compared to the rest of the communist world, Hungary was privileged in its relations to the West. Now with the transformation of Eastern Europe as a whole, we're losing our preferential place." To criticisms from the Democratic Forum that SDS's policies would virtually sell out the country, the SDS responds that, given the country's debt, it is for all practical purposes sold out, and in any event if Hungary is to join the general process of European integration, the old categories of "national" economies must be reconsidered.

The DF prefers a more cautious process of economic liberalization, and accepts a larger state role in the future economy. "We support privatization with the involvement of both foreign and Hungarian capital," says DF economic adviser Bertalan Dichazi, "but the . . . whole process [should be] carried out under strict public control." He advocates an independent watchdog, answerable to parliament, to oversee privatization—and the machinations of the old nomenklatura. (The DF also has the interests of its own constituents at heart; the country intelligentsia which makes up its backbone composes a strata anxious to supplant the nomenklatura.)

What of the Social Democrats? Their president, Petrasovits, is frank about the dilemmas they face in a period which, in her view, requires liberal economic policies—privatization, liberalization of foreign trade policy, and diversification of property ownership. She urges strong and independent trade unionism and a "socially responsible state,"

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rejecting "the neoliberal notion that the market can regulate everything." She goes on: "Right now Hungarian Social Democrats must speak of social responsibility and build a people's party—of workers, intellectuals and entrepreneurs—not a class party." The party platform declares: "Economic efficiency must be coordinated with social justice—market competition controlled by solidarity."

"I will never acknowledge that the mistakes made by my comrades meant that we should have given up one-party rule," says Robert Ribanszky, an animated, cigar-puffing man who insists, even after the collapse of the one-party regimes, that his type of communism is a "historical necessity." Replacing it by a multiparty system was a mistake. Even in 1956, "the Hungarian masses didn't support a multiparty system." It was manipulating politicians who did.

Ribanszky has special credentials when it comes to 1956. He was János Kádár's secretary from November of that year until June 1958, that is, from the month in which Kádár betrayed the Hungarian revolution and became Hungary's chief, to the month in which its leader, Imre Nagy, was executed. "Democracy means that you vote for or against," he told me, "but not for different parties . . . . When we had the one-party system, it is a historical fact that we had a democracy."

Last year Ribanszky fought the Communist reformers; upon losing, he and like-minded comrades—among whom he apparently is considered slightly *outré*—formed their own party. I asked what conclusions he would draw if his party lost the upcoming elections with, say, less than 10 percent of the vote. "It'll be natural," he said. "Perhaps with less than 5 percent of the vote. It'll be the result of all the propaganda against us."

After speaking to Ribanszky, I recalled a comment made by the Social Democrats' Petrasovits: "I feel fine using the word 'comrade' in West Berlin. Here in Budapest it gives me the creeps."

A large part of the world, alas, thinks of the Robert Ribanszkys when the word "socialism" is uttered. That is why conservatives today believe they are dancing on its grave. They may yet be in for a surprise. They imagine themselves to be the composers of the dirge to which they dance; in reality it was composed by the now-fallen Leninists and Stalinists. Once the current neoliberal "free market" myths play themselves out—they are in part a natural overreaction to the last four decades—new political spaces will open. In Western Europe there is substantial social democratic strength, as demonstrated in last year's elections for the European parliament.

Whether that strength will be turned into social creativity is an open question. The answer will depend on taking the old idea of socialism and giving it new meanings; meanings inseparable from democracy, meanings that never forget the disasters done in its name by command economies and "vanguard" parties; but meanings that insist on egalitarian humanism in a new-old world. □

Notes

[1] See Ivan Szelényi, "Eastern Europe in an Epoch of Transition," which I partly paraphrase, in V. Nee and D. Sark, eds., *Remaking the Economic Institutions of Socialism* (Stanford: 1989), pp. 212–16.

[2] See J.F. Brown, *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule* (Durham and London: 1988), p. 246 and Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham: 1986), pp. 196–200.

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Daniel Bell

AS WE GO INTO THE NINETIES

Some Outlines of the Twenty-First Century

As we enter the 1990s, the outline of the twenty-first century, with respect to the configuration of issues and forces, already seems clear. We can identify four:

1. The collapse of communism
2. The reunification of Europe
3. The end of "The American Century"
4. The rise of the Pacific rim

Beyond these are other, more inchoate and indistinct forms, whose outlines are not as clear, though this does not mean they are of lesser importance. In some instances, as the twenty-first century unfolds, they may, indeed, prove to be the most disruptive. These issues are the following: the problems of poverty in the Third World (exempting East Asia now from that configuration), the fratricidal rivalries in the Middle East, and the rising ethnic and nationalist rivalries in many different parts of the world, as the older issues of class and imperialism recede.

How can we understand these new forces in some systematic way? Is there some framework that allows us to order them in some explanatory fashion? More than fifteen years ago, in seeking to provide a coherent picture of the world at that time, I set forth four "axes" along which the alignments might be understood. These were, schematically put:

1. *East* vs. *West*. This rivalry was principally between the United States and the Soviet Union and the forces grouped behind them in the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances. The rivalries here were political and ideological, with the constant threat of military confrontation. This was the cold war.

2. *West* vs. *West*. This rivalry was principally between the United States on the one side and, on the other, Japan (putting her in this context within the West) and Germany. The rivalry here was economic.

3. *North* vs. *South*. Here were the OECD, or industrialized countries, versus the newly industrializing societies, the "Group of 77" within the United Nations, who were demanding a redistribution of world manufacturing capacity. The issues here were economic and ideological.

4. *East* vs. *East*. This rivalry was the Soviet Union against China, where the competitions were ideological and political with a thin threat of military conflict.

It was, and still is to some extent, a useful frame of reference.* The intention was to see which axis was salient, at what time. When this was first presented it was obvious that the East vs. West axis dominated all others. The West vs. West was only a dim cloud, and some writers thought it improbable. North vs. South was very strident. And East vs. East was very strained.

Today it is likely that the cold war is finished. West vs. West, in particular the rivalry between Japan and the United States on economic issues, has become highly salient. But there is also now the rise of the various East Asian "tigers," such as Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand, to add to that competition. North vs. South at the moment is somewhat muted. And East vs. East is, for the while, quiet.

That analytical framework may still have some limited use. But there is now a new

* Much of this scheme was elaborated in my essay "The Future World Disorder" (1977), reprinted in my book *The Winding Passage* (Basic Books, 1980).

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intellectual challenge to provide a different, coherent framework to encompass the new alignments as they are emerging. Whether this can be done remains to be seen. But before we can do so, there is much detailed analysis to explore.

Events of the Past Decade

For almost fifty years after the Russian Revolution of October 1917, it seemed as if Marxism would sweep the world. Nothing so blazing as revolutionary Marxism had been seen, as some historians compared it, since the rise of Islam more than a millennium before. Here was a new faith system that had inspired working-class movements in Europe, sparked a revolution in China, become a model for intellectuals in Latin America and new elites in Africa, and so on. And now it has collapsed, in less than a decade, like a house of cards. It would take many volumes to analyze the reasons why. For the moment, let us deal with two related groups, one the Soviet Union, the other Eastern Europe.

There are, I would say, three factors, now conjoined, that account for the crisis in the Soviet Union:

1. *The failure of the economic model.* Soviet planning was rigid and inflexible and, beyond an initial start, it could not manage a large and complex economy. In an early essay Lenin said that planning was a simple affair. If there were 200 million Russians and each one needed two pairs of shoes, one produced 400 million pairs. There is, paradoxically enough, a *surplus* of shoes today in Soviet warehouses. But nobody wants them. They are too ungainly, shoddily constructed, and of poor quality. What the Soviet Union had, in the early five-year plans, was not "planning" but a *mobilized* economy based on *physical* targets. But there was no price mechanism to judge whether resources were being used efficiently. In fact, for dogmatic reasons, Soviet planners did not use the mechanism of interest rates (since interest was usury and exploitative) as a measure of the relative efficiency of capital. At the same time there were heavy subsidies on such items as bread and housing rents. But no one knew the true costs; more resources were devoted to bread, and because it was relatively cheap, the product was misused. Lacking a true cost and accounting system (and using a double-ruble system to divert resources for military use) Soviet planners had no measures of the deficits they were running and the inflation that was hidden. Today the economy is in shambles.

2. *The failure of ideology.* Ideologies are worldviews (weltanschaunungen) that mobilize their believers for a "cause" and provide a set of justifications on the basis of the "higher" goals. But the "revolutionary" goals of egalitarianism and of a classless society, and the ideas of socialized property, gave way, increasingly, to a "new class" of privileged, the *nomenklatura*; and the regime, particularly under Stalin, resorted to terror as a means of forcing compliance with its demands. The failure of ideology, when there are no other justifications, means a loss of legitimacy and the beliefs of the rulers and the ruled in their "right" to rule. For a period of time, the "patriotic war" against Nazi Germany provided a social cement. But the resumptions of terror and privilege eroded those commitments.

3. *The crumbling of "empire."* What was little known is that the Soviet Union was the *only* nation that came out of World War II with extensive territorial gains, at a time when almost all the other imperial and colonial powers were surrendering their control over lands in Asia and Africa. Since 1940, starting with the Nazi-Soviet pact, the Soviet Union annexed Finnish Karelia, the Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the Koenigsberg district of East Prussia, the eastern provinces of Poland, the sub-Carpathian district of Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia, Bukovina and Bessarabia from Romania, and the Sakhalin and Kurile islands from Japan.

In addition, badly drawn boundary lines within the older Soviet Union have left large pockets of ethnic rivalries, such as the Caucasus territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is heavily Armenian and Christian within the republic of Azerbaijan, which is Muslim. On the Black Sea, the small area of Abkazia wishes to secede from neighboring Georgia, while Georgia itself wants autonomy within the Soviet Union. And, more to the point, the most successful economic region of the Soviet

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Union, the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, are now demanding, if not freedom, then almost complete autonomy.

Almost twenty years ago, the Soviet dissident and writer Andrei Amalrik (who spent many years in the gulag and was killed tragically in an automobile accident) wrote a tract, *Will Russia Survive Until 1984?* It seemed odd and fanciful at the time. Now Russian politicians such as Boris Yeltsin (himself somewhat of an opportunist and demagogue) ask seriously whether the Soviet Union can last until 1994.

No one can provide an answer. It has been the genius of Mikhail Gorbachev that he has recognized all the problems and sought to provide reforms through *perestroika*. He has, at the same time, recognized that the party cannot rule alone and has begun to create political structures with a degree of independent power. Even if Gorbachev succeeds, it is evident that the Soviet Union cannot remain an effective superpower and that the military and ideological threat it once posed, especially to Europe, has now largely receded. If he fails? There was once an old Soviet joke that said that when Stalin died he left two envelopes. One said, "In case of trouble, open this." Trouble arose and the envelope was opened. In it was a message that said, "Blame me." The other envelope said, "In the event of more trouble, open this." More trouble came and the second envelope was opened. It said, "Do as I did."

That is now impossible. Deng Xiaoping could still have the authority among the veterans of the Chinese revolution to give an order to shoot. Gorbachev cannot. His destruction of Stalin and the legitimacy of that "revolution" makes it impossible. Yet if Gorbachev fails, the greater likelihood is that of a right-wing, nationalist reaction, using the symbols of old Russia and seeking to mobilize the Soviet people on the basis of traditional symbols. But such a move would alienate the intelligentsia and the modernizing elements in the Soviet Union, and even if a right-wing force came into power, its economic base would still be weak.

About Eastern Europe: the news has been electrifying. Within a few months the communist regimes of Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia have crumbled. The reasons are fairly clear. In almost no country had there been strong, indigenous communist forces. The regimes were *imposed* almost entirely from the outside and reinforced by Soviet troops. More than that, in the first decade after World War II, Stalin purged the leadership of most of the native Communist parties in a sweeping set of trials. In Czechoslovakia, there was the Slansky trial. In Hungary, the Rajk trial. In Bulgaria, the Petkov trial, and so on. In 1956, an independent Hungarian regime led by *communists*, such as the premier Imre Nagy, was suppressed by Soviet tanks, and Nagy was executed and buried in an unmarked grave until the poignant moment last summer when his remains were given a public, ceremonial funeral. In 1968, the Prague Spring, the effort of Alexander Dubcek to put forth the new idea of "socialism with a human face," was smashed by Soviet tanks.

Once *glasnost* and political reforms had begun in the Soviet Union, how could the older regimes hold out against change? They could not. In Hungary, the Communist party has dissolved itself, and only *5 percent* of its former members have joined a new Communist party. In Poland, the Communist party, though nominally guaranteed a majority of seats in the lower house, could not even gain enough votes to ratify that agreement, and a non-Communist is the prime minister of Poland, received with amiable greeting by Gorbachev himself.

From all that political rubble, one thing is clear. Whatever the formal adherence to the Warsaw Pact may mean, Eastern Europe is no longer a reliable force for the Soviet Union. Nor is East Germany. So far as Europe is concerned, the cold war is over and new configurations are about to begin.

What of the Future?

Let me turn, now, to the new configurations:

1. *The reunification of Europe*. The framework with which we have all been operating has been the idea of the European Economic Community, the twelve-nation "common-

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wealth" scheduled to come to fruition in 1992 and that, already, has taken distinct shape.

Now three new factors have to be taken into account. One is the possible—and probable—reunification of the two Germanys into a single entity of eighty million persons, which will make it the most powerful economic unit of Europe. The second is the inclusion of Eastern Europe in a European trade bloc. And the third is the relation of the Soviet Union to Europe.

Historically, the Soviet Union has feared the emergence of a new, unified Germany. Historically, the two have been antagonists, even though a different set of dreamers, the German geopolitical strategists, such as Karl Haushofer, envisioned a new Eurasia, spanning the heartland of Europe and Asia and becoming the center of world power.

Although history has always been important in understanding the destinies of nations, it can also be misleading. England and France were enemies at the beginning of the nineteenth century and allies at the beginning of the twentieth. History has been important when *land* and *territory* were the goals of national states. Today these are less important than *technology*. The overriding need of the Soviet Union is for technology. And here, Germany, even a reunified Germany, becomes a useful partner. Already a deal had been struck ten years ago for a new pipeline that would bring natural gas from Siberia to Germany.

Until now, the Soviet Union has depended upon Czechoslovakia and East Germany for much of its manufactured products and for steel and machine tools. But both economies have become increasingly outmoded and incapable of supplying the Soviet Union with the new modern technology that it needs, particularly computer technology and telecommunications. West Germany becomes the "natural" source of this technology.

In effect, the logic of the economic interdependencies and needs, the huge timber, oil and gas, and mineral resources of the Soviet Union and the technology of Western Europe, dovetail into a pattern. Eastern Europe itself, if its industries are modernized, can provide the light industry (shoes and textiles) as well as the older manufactured products, including steel, as well as cheaper labor, for Western Europe.

These closer bonds would mean the destruction of the older NATO and Warsaw Pact configurations. England and France are bound to be wary of such moves—unless the security issue is completely resolved. Here the key is the Soviet Union. If Gorbachev takes convincing steps to reduce the Soviet military posture, then the economic logic can begin to operate. From his point of view, there is a contradictory problem. Reducing the military sector means freeing resources for the consumer sector. At the same time, the military has been an important power base for him—especially as the Communist party itself has become weakened. The military remains the major organized base of power within the Soviet Union. How Gorbachev manages these tasks will be decisive for his own retention of power, as well as for the necessary economic moves he has to make vis-à-vis Europe.

2. *The end of "The American Century."* The American Century was a phrase fashioned by Henry Luce—proprietor of *Time, Life* and *Fortune*, the most influential periodicals of their day—during World War II to herald a new and majestic role for the United States. Like all such ambitions, it had a mixture of idealism and economic self-interest. Luce, the son of Christian missionaries, whose early years had been spent in China, saw the American Century as fulfilling the Christian obligations of the United States to be "the good Samaritan," the helper of the poor and the needy. At its best, this was expressed politically by the Marshall Plan, which led to the economic reconstruction of Europe, and by substantial aid to Japan. As the cold war developed, the United States—which had begun to disarm after World War II—became the military protector of both Europe and Japan against the Soviet Union. Its economic role became intertwined with its military role, creating what President Eisenhower called "the military-industrial complex." While military expenditure has never been the *necessary* basis for America's continuing economic growth, it has been an important one.

Four elements conjoin to reduce the centrality and power of the United States as the twenty-first century emerges: One is the reduction of the great power confrontations,

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and therefore the decisive political role of the United States as the "leader" of the world. Second is the rise of Japanese economic power, especially in the central high-technology sectors. Third are the low investment and productivity features of the American economy, which begin to sap its strength. And fourth comes the increasing difficulty of coping with domestic social problems such as crime and drugs, the aging infrastructures, and the declining quality of life in the central cities.

However, there has been a tendency, of late, to assume that the United States is almost "finished" as a major power. That would be misleading. The United States still maintains the general lead in technological *innovation*—if not always in development. (VCRs, facsimile, multivalve engines, and dozens of other products were created in the United States, though quickly developed elsewhere, as in Japan.) The United States maintains the foremost graduate education and scientific power of any country in the world. Japan, for example, has had strong universities but almost no graduate schools of any consequence. England and Europe, also with strong universities, do not have the scientific manpower and talent or the graduate schools of the United States. The United States remains the largest market for many export-led countries such as Korea to sell their products to. And in military and space technology, including aircraft, the United States maintains sizable leads.

The new free-trade pact with Canada and the growing integration of Mexican manufacture with U.S. industries provide a possible foundation for economic expansion. Nor should one ignore the political stability that provides a haven for jittery capital in other countries.

3. *The Pacific Rim*. What is evident here is the centrality of Japan as the major economic and financial power in the Pacific. And events in the last year have given Japan two "reprieves." One is the reduction of the Soviet military threat. In recent years, Japan has been under pressure from the United States to spend more on defense and military security. It has been yielding to that pressure. Now there is much less of that need. And the Soviet Union has even been making noises about returning some of the islands near Hokkaido to Japan, as a gesture of goodwill, and is seeking financial credits and technology from Japan. With the reduction of the Soviet threat, Japan is in a better position to resist American political and economic pressure on trade.

The second "reprieve" is China. The events in Tiananmen Square have, for the while, cut China off from the rest of the world. Historically, the United States, going back to the American Secretary of State John Hay, has always been *pro-China* in its policy. One of the "cards" open to the United States in recent years vis-à-vis Japan has been to develop political and economic relations with China. This was, particularly, the grand design of Henry Kissinger. And it would have led to a counterweight of U.S.-China relations to Japan and to the Soviet Union.

But as for Japan—and other East Asian countries—what is also evident is the re-creation, with the cooperation of Australia and the Asian countries, of the old East Asia Co-Prosperity scheme. The industrialization of East Asia is proceeding rapidly, with Japan supplying most of the capital. A recent report of the Japan Center for Economic Research (October 1989) points out that in fiscal 1985 Japanese investments in manufacturing in Asian firms totaled $460 million. This increased 80 percent in the next year, and doubled the following one, and rose again by 40 percent in fiscal 1988. The total investments by electrical-machinery makers rose more than five times from 1985 to 1986 and have been increasing by 80 percent a year since then.

Given these emerging frameworks, what can one say, in summary, regarding the configuration of the twenty-first century as it is now appearing? I leave aside, as I said previously, the difficult questions of the increasing poverty and the widening gaps between the developed and the developing worlds, particularly in Africa. I leave aside the intractable passions of the Middle East. And there is the difficult question of the stability of the Soviet Union, given its economic and empire tensions.

North and South remain as an axis of

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division, which will likely become increasingly threatening after the first quarter of the twenty-first century. East vs. East is, for the while, in stasis, and much will depend upon the successors of Deng and even Gorbachev (who is likely to last, if he can surmount his difficulties, to the end of the century). And as for East vs. West, the United States and the Soviet Union may enter a period of détente.

The major new alignments that are coming into place are the regional blocs. These are economic-political units of a larger viability for nations to manage their problems of economic transition. A united Europe, a Continental North American economy, and a Japan-dominated Pacific region become the great land-mass units for economic, and even political, power. It would mean, if economic logic also followed, the replacement of the dollar by a managed basket of the ECU (European currency unit), the dollar, and the yen as the mechanisms of exchange and trade balance.

One major caution: one cannot "predict" events and their outcomes, crucial as they may be; for example, the direction of China with the passing of Deng Xiaoping and his generation. One can only, as I have tried to do here, define "structural arrangements" to provide a grid for analysis.

If one looks ahead to the end of the century, there are two "structural" problems that loom quite large. One is demographic. In the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, we have aging populations. In most of the Third World countries—Algeria and Mexico are the prime examples—the youth cohort under seventeen years of age is between 40 to 50 percent of the population. Logically there are only three things one can do: take their people, buy their goods, or give them capital. All three pose difficulties that are not easy to resolve.

The second "structural" problem is the rising tension between the contrary pulls of the global economy and the national polities. Capital can flow easily; people cannot. No nation today controls its own currency and capital flows to take advantage of differential interest rates, cheaper labor, and better investment opportunities. But people, unless destitute or highly skilled, cannot move as readily; nor are many countries prepared to take them. More than that, as jobs slip away, the question before a regime is does it protect capital or people. In the United States we have seen this in the textile and automobile business and now in semiconductors. A large economy such as ours may be able to manage such transitions, but many cannot, and the fragmentation of many polities around the world because of economic difficulties, multiplied subsequently by ethnic clashes, increases the chances for what is called in the jargon of the Pentagon planner, "low-intensity conflicts."

These are the undertows and riptides in the world society. The interplay of demography, global economy, and national polity becomes the framework for trying to understand the problems of the twenty-first century. □

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Bogdan Denitch

THE TRIUMPH OF CAPITALISM?

A Result of the Collapse of Communism?

The familiar debate about the prospects for capitalism and socialism has taken a sharp turn as a result of three new trends transforming the politics of the world. In brief, these are the collapse of the communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe, the end of the cold war, and the growing pace of European unification. Each by itself would represent a major development; the three together mark a profound historical change.

One likely consequence will be a relative decline in the economic and military position of the United States, with a consequent loss of moral and political authority. This also means that the capitalism that will continue to dominate the world is likely to have new and peculiar characteristics, rather different from those propounded by Anglo-Saxon apologists. It will be a world capitalism without the familiar cold war; without the United States as dominant power; without a threat, real or supposed, of Soviet expansionism.

It will take some time for the magnitude of these changes to sink in. But, clearly, the capitalism likely to prevail in Europe will be different from the American and British models, perhaps in some instances sharply different. For capitalism is not an abstract entity, beyond the impact of time and historical change. Nor is it simply an economic system (whatever that might mean). It is a historically inflected and changing system, in which political, economic, and social arrangements interact.

Capitalism has its institutions and legal systems, its armed bodies of men, its dominant ideology, and certain kinds of political relations on a world scale. It is also a system in which the *political* rule of parties committed to its maintenance—as it exists in actuality, and not as a theoretical "model"—is necessary. This is true whether the dominant party is officially procapitalist or prolabor, conservative or social democratic. Seen from this perspective, capitalism is in considerable trouble in at least three places: Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the Third World. Let me take these in order, keeping in mind that capitalism in trouble does not necessarily signify good news for democrats and socialists.

Eastern Infatuation

Large sections of the East European intelligentsia, it is true, are now fascinated by the idea of "the market." That "market," however, has rather little to do with the market that functions in the real capitalist world. The talk about markets in former communist states often serves as a synonym or code word for seeing to it that the state and especially the party are deprived of control over the economy and society. In East European countries lacking a usable tradition of political democracy, the market that is now being introduced could well bring about what I'd call a process of "Mexicanization." Both Mexico and a "Mexicanized" Eastern Europe have to cope with giant superpowers pressing down upon them; both are or will be mixed economies with a powerful state sector, a corrupt yet vital private sector, an elite that includes technocrats, decent trade unionists, corrupt trade unionists, as well as the rich and the gangsters. We will have all of that in Eastern Europe, and whatever else, it will not be capitalism as

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described in textbooks or the kinds of prose poems about the "free market" that have been appearing in the American press. Rather, it will be a highly politicized system, with political dominance manifesting itself through the economy, although at least in part it will include a functioning market. But, *nota bene,* this market economy will be subject to considerable corruption as former bureaucrats of the nomenklatura join foreign investors in a scramble to grab the more lucrative chunks of the economy at knock-down prices. Happily, many of these people will lose their shirts—the fates are sometimes just.

My prediction is that after the kissing stops, some very grim economic and social issues will come up. The prognosis for a decent democratic outcome is best for those countries with powerful, old-fashioned trade unions struggling to make sure that the burden of social transformation is not borne entirely by industrial workers and other employees. Whatever else, the upheavals in Eastern Europe did not take place in order to abolish the crude but almost universal welfare systems. To the contrary, *improvements* in services, health, education, and pensions, not to speak of living standards, are expected to result from toppling the party dictatorships—and sooner rather than later.

The idea of introducing the raw market of Thatcherite capitalism is therefore—short of authoritarian repression—politically unviable, even if it were morally and economically desirable. Since the communist parties are now disabled, an authoritarian repression could come only from the right, or from a curious union of communist technocrats and nationalist populists. In consequence, the optimistic prognosis for Eastern Europe would be for parliamentary democracies with strong unions, mixed economies, and a substantial socially owned or nationalized sector. In other words, a social-democratic type of neocorporatism, somewhat like the West European welfare states. The pessimistic prognosis is for a xenophobic nationalist-populist authoritarian neocorporatism with limited democracy. Neither represents quite the victory of capitalism now being celebrated in the Western press. And neither represents a victory of socialism.

Mitigating Factors in the West

In Western Europe capitalism is also facing peculiar circumstances. There are at least three forces that militate against capitalism as popularly understood in the United States and Great Britain: that is, the free market geared to profit maximization. That system is, of course, a myth, although a very powerful myth. There are a number of obstacles to such a mythopoetic system dominating a unified European Community. First, powerful trade unions allied to the social democratic parties, which have a plurality in the European parliament. Their prospects for increased political power are increasing. Second, the Catholic Church and the social-Christian parties allied with it do not take to possessive individualism with any more enthusiasm than do the social democrats—as a matter of fact, their formulation is that private property is acceptable provided society holds a mortgage on it. Presumably, this mortgage can be called in when the private property in question no longer serves socially acceptable ends. Third, others not exactly committed to free marketeering are the Eurocrats, an increasingly influential bureaucracy in the European Community in Brussels (against which Thatcher leads a valiant and, happily, losing struggle). The Eurocrats are economic and social interventionists or statists, anything but free marketeers. So the capitalism of Western Europe will be a sort of neocorporatist arrangement, with powerful trade unions, an advanced welfare state, and a great deal of controls—conscious, politically imposed controls over what can and cannot be done with the movement of capital and where investments should go and what social policies should be. That is, a capitalism modified and defanged by social democracy.

This will, of course, not be socialism as we democratic socialists understand it. It will, however, be a capitalism almost unrecognizable to American businessmen and their intellectual cheerleaders. It will be a capitalism somewhat like that in Sweden today. But that tells us that the political, social, and economic terrain that contemporary capitalism represents

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in real life is an enormously wide one, with the political and social outcomes not at all predictable. Once you have said a society is capitalist, you have not said much, or enough, about it. You are only *beginning* to describe that society.

The transition from feudalism to capitalism took centuries. A new postcapitalist order called socialism may also take centuries to develop. But it will make an enormous difference whether that development occurs in a society where labor and socialist parties are strong, where a measure of social justice is legislated, and where a democratic welfare state exists that is more egalitarian than the communism of the past forty years. (The difference in wages between a Swedish factory worker and a manager in the auto industry are one to three. That means the actual socioeconomic differences are smaller in Sweden than in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. So, when we say that Sweden is a capitalist society, that needs to be qualified over and over again.)

Blocking Democracy in the Third World

The third place in which capitalism is not in very good shape is the Third World. Despite the brief celebration of the economic results of the Chicago school in Chile, Brazil, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, and Argentina, it turns out that the notion that markets and capitalism necessarily bring about democracy is not true. Quite the contrary. Insisting on marketizing those economies, on having them abide by the rules of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank is an almost sure guarantee that democracy will be endangered. It is very hard to be democratic and carry out the World Bank's economic cure, which includes cutbacks in already miserly social spending, freezing wages, and letting prices find their natural level. The economic burden such a policy imposes on the working population is not one that any popular regime or democratic polity can bear.

Capitalism has triumphed in the Third World, but in a peculiar sense. As the communist bloc collapses, so does its model for the Third World collapse. The Soviet Union is no longer a convincing rival in the Third World. It is difficult to treat somebody as a convincing rival if he comes requesting loans and technological aid. What follows is that a main ideological prop in the Third World—the cold war—is now gone. This means, to use an old-fashioned term, that the contradictions of the capitalist system itself become the terrain of political struggle. No longer can one say (not that it was ever morally valid), "Yes, yes, we, or our paid thugs, murder nuns and priests, but there is a more dangerous communist menace." And one cannot keep saying "Free trade unions are a nice thing but of course we will postpone that until we defeat communist insurgency." Now that communism has defeated itself, the issues of social justice, trade union rights, public squalor and private wealth will become central. An open socialist party campaigning on these issues came within an inch of winning the first democratic election in Brazil since the end of decades of military regime rule.

Apologists for capitalism are not very good at fighting over these issues. Admiration for capitalism in real life is limited to a small section of the population. For example, most East Europeans I speak to love the market abstractly. The market they love means a guaranteed job for them and their children and relatives and of course their friends, cheap housing, public health, free education, and a pension. Provided they have all these things they would love to have a market in which they could get jeans that fit. But that's not what the market is all about. Most of the free-market supporters in Eastern Europe would be utterly shocked at the poverty and social injustice imbedded in American society. Poor as most of the East European cities are, you will not find people sleeping in the streets. Nor in most of Western Europe.

The visible exception is Great Britain. Social brutality seems now to be an Anglo-American specialty. But once you can no longer wield the threat of dictatorial communism in political debate, a whole host of domestic social issues becomes truly urgent. Nor is it only the left that believes that America has desperately overdue social agendas if this is to be a minimally decent society. The smarter pundits of the American right, like Kevin Phillips, predict

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that in the nineties the pendulum will swing away from conservative dominance.

If, then, capitalism faces serious troubles, what has triumphed? What has triumphed is the notion that socialism is not something that can be wished into being overnight. What has triumphed is the notion that there may be an extremely long period of transition during which most countries will be a part of a single world market that is essentially capitalist. But what has not triumphed is the worldview of the Chicago school, Margaret Thatcher, Reaganauts, and the others; that peculiarly puritanical version of capitalism that is really a part of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism.

Necessity of a Democratic State

In Eastern Europe the goal of democratic movements has to be the creation of a legal order where the judiciary system is independent of the state, a richly varied civil society autonomous from the state and the dominant political parties, genuine mass democratic trade unions, and a multiparty parliamentary democracy. These are necessary but not sufficient prerequisites for a genuine democracy, which should also move toward workers' control in the workplace, popular grass-roots participatory authority in the various institutions, and the abolition of gender oppression. Such democratic socialist goals are not to be counterposed to the institutionalization of a democratic polity. Fighting for these goals requires stable democratic institutions and development of a democratic political culture. A parliamentary democracy with powerful unions, parties, and social movements is the optimal terrain on which to work for democratic change. This requires tolerance, a virtue rare enough anywhere and positively priceless in Eastern Europe, where common sense argues against pushing political and national differences to the limit, at least until democratic institutions develop firmness and stability.

Tolerance of differences is essential in order to build stable democratic regimes. It is the precondition for a democratic civic culture. That means no vengeance, no matter how justified, against former communist hardliners, no attempts to illegalize communist parties, and above all no hunt for scapegoats in what will be grim times.

Eastern Europe is populated today with ghosts of chauvinist, populist, and right-wing corporatist parties. It is important to try to keep these ghosts quiet. Nationalism is the red meat of the organic "genuine" Heideggerian national community, all too easy to mobilize against a mere "cool" legal and rational democratic universalism. It is therefore a continual threat to those who would build a multiparty democratic order. Nor does it help the prospects for democracy that many of the reformist intellectuals in Eastern Europe have fallen in love with the idea of the market. From love of that idea almost as much suffering may be visited on Eastern Europe as has been for the equally abstract idea of centralized planning. There seems to be no limit to how much suffering can be imposed on living bodies in the name of abstract ideas. That seems to be the original sin of intellectuals.

In Hungary national populists have already begun attacking "cosmopolitan," read Jewish, big-city liberals. Similar national populist attacks on economic reforms and pluralistic democracy, with or without anti-Semitic subtexts, can be expected in Poland, Romania, and Serbia. The road to democratization runs through perilous straits in Eastern Europe. That is why it is essential to help democratic institutions, trade unions, and civic groups with massive moral, political, and material support from the West.

Genuine democracy requires at least minimal commitment to social justice. Effective political equality is not consistent with great differences in wealth. Wealth all too easily translates into political power. The social solidarity required to make the sacrifices necessary for modernizing the East European economies cannot be generated with an untrammeled "pure" market economy. There is no such thing as a "pure" economic policy that can be isolated from social and political consequences. Professors Friedman and Sachs should be kept at a distance from policy making in Eastern Europe. Their policies are dangerous to democracy itself. □

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European Revolutions

Lewis A. Coser

THE INTELLECTUALS IN SOVIET REFORM

On "Pluralistic Ignorance" & Mass Communications

We bring together here several short comments on the remarkable events in Eastern Europe. As usual, each writer expresses an individual opinion.—EDS.

In one of the earliest issues of *Dissent* (Summer 1954) we published an essay by Isaac Deutscher on "The Future of Russian Society" in which he argued that the major reconstruction of the Russian economy had been completed and that Russia was now engaged in a gigantic effort to further develop its productive forces. Given this large-scale development of the productive forces, Deutscher argued, in good Marxist fashion, that one was now likely to witness a relaxation of controls, a liberalization of the regime, and a gradual democratization of Soviet society.

I answered him in the same issue, arguing that no ruling groups are ever likely to acquiesce in a curtailment of their power and that basic democratic changes in Russia would come from below rather than from above. "The dominance of the Russian oligarchy," I wrote, "may be ended in various ways, but it will not be terminated by its self-immolation on the altar of democracy."

What we have been witnessing in recent months in the Soviet Union, and in its satellites as well, is a mutual dependence of reforming forces from above and below. The party and state apparatus under Gorbachev and in Eastern Europe have moved toward reform at a pace that would have astounded even Deutscher, but at the same time, forces from below, less so in the Soviet Union than in the satellites, have reappeared on the political scene in a way that would have astounded even Rosa Luxemburg. It is the conjunction of these two forces that explains the world-shaking events that we have been witnessing in the last few months. Let me try to sketch some of the factors that explain these momentous events.

For many years *Dissent* editors were largely agreed on the proposition that basic change on the Soviet scene could only come from revolt of the underlying population; that is, they clung to a Luxemburgian belief in the spontaneity of oppressed masses in revolt against totalitarian overlords. Yet we also subscribed, fully or only partly, to Hannah Arendt's diagnosis of totalitarian societies as marked by the attack on the bonds of class, family, religion, profession, and the coordination of all societal forces by all-embracing totalitarian overlords. Totalitarian regimes, Arendt argued, were characterized by the atomization of society and an enforced destruction of all bonds of community among individuals. I do not think that either the other editors or I were aware of the contradiction between a Luxemburgian belief in the creative spontaneity of the workers and the Arendtian contention that in the totalitarian iron cage,

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given the destruction of all nonparty social forces, mass action was no longer possible.

What Hannah Arendt and most of us failed to realize was that the atomization model ceased to explain Soviet events once Soviet citizens could no longer be insulated from contacts with the rest of the world and once individuals found ways to escape from the enforced isolation that had them in its grips during the Stalin years.

Let me put it another way. In totalitarian societies, such as existed under Hitler and Stalin, there can be no spontaneous bonds among people—what bonds there are, are imposed from above, and people are reduced to social atoms or "monads" without windows. Under such conditions we have what sociologists call pluralistic ignorance, a state of affairs where citizen A may be discontented and dissatisfied but does not know that citizen B has a similar experience. This means that a majority of citizens may feel deprived and opposed to the regime, but because there is no communication between them, they are unable to pool their knowledge and hence remain powerless and passive.

This "ideal type" of totalitarianism applies to conditions under Hitler and Stalin but Arendt failed to register and analyze, except partly in the case of Hungary, later developments in the Soviet empire.

The startling increase in mass communication among citizens within a nation and between them and the outside world has reduced pluralistic ignorance and atomization. As communist societies became increasingly dependent on mass media of communication and citizens could no longer be shut off from kinds of news and knowledge from which the regime wished to shield them, the Arendt model no longer applied. Even when the powers-that-be attempted to delay the introduction of modern channels of communication, they could no longer proceed on the basis of collective ignorance. They had to allow the citizen, even though most reluctantly, to profit from networks of communication within or outside of official channels. The clandestine circulation of opposition newsletters, easier access to foreign news, more frequent contacts with foreigners—all enabled people to gain a less distorted knowledge of events abroad and also fostered a sense of relative deprivation, an informed comparison between what "they" had and what "we" lacked. You can no longer rely on enforced ignorance if people can listen to the BBC or the Voice of America, especially when what you listen to is not only a more realistic picture of what life is like abroad but also within the Soviet sphere. Such formerly forbidden knowledge may not only result in new attitudes but also in new kinds of action. If you hear of the miners in Siberia going on strike or of Baltic nationalists demanding autonomy, you will be motivated to emulate them.

This reduction of pluralistic ignorance has led, especially among the satellites, to a political wave of tremendous power. I am arguing that we deal here not with simple imitation but with learning from what others are doing. Nor were television and radio the only powerful means of decreasing pluralistic ignorance; other factors contributed. The Catholic church in Poland provided powerful alternative channels of communication and the Protestant church in East Germany provided similar, if not quite as potent, bonds of community.

What I have been saying so far sounds optimistic but it ought to be balanced by discussing some less pleasant aspects of an exhilarating set of events. Recently I listened at Harvard to a young Russian social psychologist from Moscow University who, while clearly on the side of *glasnost* and *perestroika,* injected a few sobering notes. He argued that in significant strata of the population the recent changes encountered resistance because, as a heritage from the Stalin era and perhaps from earlier times in Russian history, there is a tendency to think in black-and-white terms. We are good, they are bad; we are moral, they are evil. What one encounters only too often, he argued, is the absence of "cognitive pluralism," or what I would call the inability to tolerate ambiguity. Accustomed to black-and-white thinking, such people lack the secure guidelines they received under Stalin and his successors. They feel disoriented by the often contradictory messages

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they now receive, even from official spokespersons. Such men and women may create significant forces of resistance to the restructuring now in process.

I surmise, however, that such reactionary tendencies are less potent among the young, among various national communities, and among women. The "haves" are more prone to cling to superannuated styles of thought than the "have-nots." Be this as it may, it is important to realize that with the restructuring of society, all sorts of reactionary and retrogressive forces attempt to share the limelight with the newer, enlightened ones.

Even though there may be some nostalgia for the good old days under Stalin, this style of thought is not likely to stop the progress of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Yet it seems a fact that economic conditions in the Soviet Union and the Soviet block are disastrous. The economic reforms now undertaken are likely to have severe short-term negative consequences: more unemployment, more insecurity, more suffering. There may appear all sorts of social ills that could in the past be hidden. They will become visible as the restraints of the past are weakened.

It is also worth mentioning that the positive steps of Russia on the international scene may well be perceived by some Russians as humiliating retreats. Such retreats stimulate not only neo-Stalinist thought but also dreams of a military solution.

My Moscow colleague thought that under these circumstances a military coup would be not probable but possible. About this I do not share his pessimism even though I see the dangers he points to. He argued that a military regime would not necessarily preclude a loosening of governmental ties in the economy. And indeed Pinochet in Chile showed that one can very well combine political dictatorship with economic "liberalism." Granted, then, that a military regime is conceivable in the Soviet Union and perhaps elsewhere, it is still unlikely. If the West were to be unreceptive to Soviet attempts to terminate the cold war, then such a military regime might find some popular support and encourage foreign adventures.

By and large, however, conditions are not ripe for a military solution. The military have been successfully insulated from political affairs for many decades. And, perhaps more important, they are not likely to inspire trust in the population at large. Such trust, it seems to me, has been eroding in the last few decades. A military regime might acquire some sullen acquiescence but surely no enthusiasm, particularly among the intelligentsia.

Students, academics, and professionals have been in the vanguard of the struggle for freedom in the Soviet Union and its satellites. With them, well understood self-interest and moral interest go together. They profit directly from the fact that channels of communication are now wide open. Openness is in their personal, their corporate, and their moral interest. That is one reason the power holders will find it exceedingly difficult to reverse their liberalizing course.

The regime is in a bind because, while it may well wish to reduce the freedom of the intelligentsia, it is also dependent on it. Earlier despotisms found it relatively easy to deal with dissatisfied mandarins, who could be decapitated without much fuss. But modern men and women of ideas have skills that are absolutely indispensable for those in power. You cannot do without computer operators, without atomic physicists, or without laser technicians. That is why the regime, even when it talks tough to the intelligentsia, as in China, cannot risk losing its contributions.

The fact that the intelligentsia is no longer dispensable in the Soviet sphere is among the prime reasons why a return to a totalitarian regime or to military solutions is unlikely. If public opinion has become important, you need social scientists to study it. You cannot have a closed society based on computers and fax machines.

Very much of what will happen in the Soviet sphere will depend on the way the intelligentsia plays the very complicated game of accepting benefits and concessions from the regime while also, at the same time, refusing to be coopted. If the intelligentsia is indeed indispensable, it may well be the saving remnant in the decaying structure of the Soviet bloc. □

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Irving Howe

FROM THE DUSTBIN OF HISTORY

Anyone who follows, even from a distance, the discussions now taking place among political thinkers in the Soviet Union, and who also remembers something about the history of Russian radicalism, must be experiencing an uncanny feeling. It's as if the writings of the long-forgotten critics of Bolshevism—the independent Polish Marxist Rosa Luxemburg, the left-Menshevik (Social Democratic) leader Julian Martov, but also a politically distant philosopher like Nicolas Berdyaev—have taken on a second life. And who knows? Perhaps the Soviet reformers and intellectuals interviewed in Stephen Cohen's absorbing book *Voices of Glasnost* actually took the trouble to look up these "obsolete" critics in the "special" library rooms that harbor their writings. It would be interesting to know.

Shortly after the Bolshevik seizure of power, Rosa Luxemburg wrote a series of articles for *Spartacus Letters* expressing her support for and criticism of the revolution. Her criticisms were of an elementary democratic kind; had they been heeded by the Leninists, the world might have been saved incalculable grief and oceans of blood.

> Freedom [she wrote] for the supporters of the [Bolshevik or any other] government, only for the members of one party—no matter how numerous they may be—is not freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. . . .
>
> Far from being a sum of ready-made prescriptions which have only to be applied, the practical realization of socialism . . . is something which lies hidden in the mists of the future. What we possess in our program is nothing but a few main signposts indicating the general direction in which to look for the necessary measures, and the indications are mainly negative at that.

That a socialist should cite these remarks with pleasure is no surprise. What may surprise and even cause disquiet is that, with the advantage of retrospect, I reluctantly find some value in the remarks of Nicolas Berdyaev and Georgey P. Fedotov, not political friends at all but philosophical-religious thinkers. Fedotov (I quote from Joseph Frank's *Through the Russian Prism*) saw in "revolutionary Marxism a Judeo-Christian apocalyptic sect" inspired in Russia by a "religious idea." Berdyaev wrote that communism, "like every religion . . . carries with it an all-embracing relation to life, decides all its fundamental questions, and claims to give a meaning to everything . . .; it takes possession of the whole soul and calls forth enthusiasm and self-sacrifice."

Now I have always believed, and still do, that the reduction of politics to religion is a vulgarity; but that isn't quite what Fedotov and Berdyaev were doing; they were describing the communist political experience, showing how much it had unwittingly taken over from its declared antagonists. Anyone who has studied, lived through, or even grazed that experience will recognize an element of truth in what they say.

The name of Julian Martov, if remembered at all, has come to us through a once-famous quip of Leon Trotsky. At a Congress of Soviets shortly after the Bolshevik revolution, Martov declared his criticisms and doubts regarding the Bolshevik course. Trotsky, with the arrogance of the victor, replied by consigning Martov to "the dustbin of history." Well, that dustbin has turned out to be quite commodious, and some unexpected guests now reside there, including tribunes of Bolshevism.

Vanquished and powerless, Martov remains an appealing figure. His position at the time of

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the revolution was weak, ambivalent, uncertain. The Mensheviks, good orthodox Marxists that they were, believed that the order of the day for Russia was a "bourgeois revolution," since so backward a country was clearly not ripe for socialism. Yet, as the bourgeois parties foundered between February and October 1917, Martov ended by calling for a coalition socialist government, one that would presumably "complete the bourgeois revolution." After the Bolsheviks seized power, he criticized their repressive policies severely, yet also supported them against the Whites in the Civil War. He remained in Russia until the end of 1920, a loyal opposition to Lenin (who didn't have much use for loyal oppositions).

In a way, the Menshevik position was arid. The Russian masses were in upheaval, the workers striking, the peasants seizing the land, the soldiers drifting away from the army—and the Mensheviks, keepers of Marxism, *knew* that the revolution must not step beyond the bounds of a democratic republic with a capitalist economy and social reforms. It was, I think, a clear case of a received formula clashing with the dynamic of history. But their criticisms of the Bolsheviks were prescient, and much of what they said can be heard today—whether repeated consciously or not—by Soviet thinkers.

The Mensheviks, especially Martov, said that

> to construct socialism it was not enough to know what was wrong with capitalism. . . . The preconditions for a socialist economy—the concentration of industry, the predominance of a conscious, highly skilled and numerous proletariat, a peasantry that supported socialist production—were missing in Russia. . . . Socialism depended upon conditions of plenty, under which "no one would have to purchase an improvement in his life at the price of another's." (Jean Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution, Russian Views of Bolshevism, 1917–1922.*)

The Mensheviks argued that a coup engineered by a disciplined minority party, even one with a mass following, could maintain itself in power only by establishing a dictatorship, what Martov, anticipating the nomenklatura, called the "Commissarocracy." Such a dictatorship, in a backward society, could only institutionalize backwardness, creating a grotesque "barracks socialism" ruled by what Milovan Djilas would call the "New Class."

The Bolsheviks were of course contemptuous of this Menshevik "scholasticism"; they believed in the will to action. But they gave some tacit credence to the Menshevik criticism, for they also knew that socialism could not be built in a peasant country like Russia. Trotsky, in his "theory of permanent revolution," postulated that a triumphant revolutionary West would come to the aid of a beleaguered Bolshevik Russia. (The cunning of history: Gorbachev would later look for advanced resources from . . . the capitalist West.) But what if the revolution did not come in the West—what then should Bolshevik Russia do? Trotsky had no persuasive answer.

At first Lenin had an answer, a poor one. In his pamphlet "Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" he wrote that if 130,000 landowners had been able to govern Russia in the past, why could not the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik party govern it now? To which Martov and others replied: Yes, you may be able to stay in power with your 240,000 members but only insofar as you approach *and then exceed* the repressive measures of the 130,000 landowners.*

By 1921 Lenin shrewdly pulled back by introducing the New Economic Policy (NEP), which partly anticipated Gorbachev's *perestroika*. Unfortunately, the Bolsheviks com-

* History is full of strange echoes, heartening reclamations. Here is the distinguished Chinese dissident Liu Binyan:

> Stalin was the first to ruin Socialism. The second was Mao. Cambodia's Pol Pot was the third. . . . These men were not really Marxists at all. They ignored Marx's basic tenet that Socialism presupposed a high level of material development. The conditions in each of the countries where these men came to power were not economically mature enough to build a Socialist society. . . . The need to maintain state power persuaded Lenin to push aside the materialist science of Marxism and attempt to establish Socialism in one backward country. The result was not true Socialism. (*New York Review of Books,* January 19, 1989.)

Is it possible that Liu Binyan encountered the writings of Martov?

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bined the economic liberalization of the NEP not with the political liberalization of *glasnost* but with a tightening of their dictatorship. By the late 1920s it was the "right" Bolshevik, Nikolai Bukharin, who realized that a stabilized NEP, or something like what we would today call a "mixed economy," was the correct path. But the actuality proved to be otherwise. With Stalin there followed forced collectivization and industrialization, accompanied by the great terror and the murder of millions. Martov, in his gloomiest forebodings, had not anticipated anything like this—you might say Stalin "overfulfilled" Martov's prophecy.

A last note. The political differences sketched here now strike me as an instance of Marxist dogmatism. "Bourgeois" or "socialist" revolution—as if these were utter opposites, forever closed off from one another! What might have enabled Russia to move into something resembling a modern democratic society would have been a republic with a mixed economy in which the peasants were allotted their plots of land, small industries allowed to remain in private hands but with proper social controls, and so on. As it was, the desperate policies of the Bolsheviks and then the mad terror of Stalin eventuated in the present crisis, where the Soviet Union, seventy years after the revolution, cannot even feed its population.

Martov was a poor leader, he was limited intellectually by a touch of Marxist scholasticism, but he was an exemplary democratic socialist. He died in 1932, an exile in Germany. His criticisms, still deep and strong, are alive today in the words of compatriots who may or may not know they are his inheritors. He speaks from "the dustbin of history." □

Reappraisal of Trotsky

Argumenty i fakty (No. 34) published excerpts from Leon Trotsky's biography of Stalin. This is the second work by Trotsky to be published in a Soviet periodical this year. The first was a series of Trotsky's articles published under the title *Novyi kurs* ["The New Course"], which appeared in *Molodoi kommunist* (No. 8). This was the first time any article by Trotsky had been published in the USSR since his exile in the late 1920s. In an introduction to the excerpts in *Argumenty i fakty*, Doctor of History Nikolai Vasetsky pointed out that, whatever the official attitude to Trotsky, he should be given due credit for his "undeviating struggle against Stalin's tyranny, against the regime of Stalin's personal power."

Further materials on and by Trotsky appeared in *Rodina* (No. 7). Dmitri Volkogonov, who is the author of a major study on Trotsky, complained that, thanks to Stalin, Trotskyism is still regarded as a subversive political tendency and not as an ideological course in the USSR. He praised Trotsky for his criticism of Stalin, which, Volkogonov stressed, has great relevance for the present. The journal also carried an essay by Trotsky entitled "Natsional'noe v Lenine," which was first published in *Pravda* on April 23, 1920. In an introduction to the essay, Doctor of History Vitalii Startsev praised Trotsky's observations about Lenin and stressed that "Trotsky belongs entirely to Russian culture and Russian literature." He also argued against blaming all the cruelty of the Civil War on Trotsky, asserting that in fact Lenin held much more responsibility than Trotsky for it. Startsev also dismissed as absurd anti-Semitic attacks on Trotsky made by Russian nationalists.

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Daniel Bell

ON THE FATE OF COMMUNISM

Asked by the German periodical Die Zeit *in August 1989 whether the opening of a MacDonald's franchise in Moscow signified "the end of Communism," Daniel Bell wrote the following reply.*—EDS.

To answer the question posed by *Die Zeit* directly would require the wit of a Karl Kraus or the mordant irony of a Franz Kafka. I have neither. Therefore I shall have to respond as a drab sociologist.

The current Soviet (or is it Hungarian, or Polish?) definition of "socialism" is that it is the longest, most tortuous road from capitalism to capitalism. This is a profound truth, a succinct statement of the fact that the Bolshevik revolution, which posed the issue of socialism in the twentieth century in a cruel and misguided way, was the wrong revolution, at the wrong time, and in the wrong place.

It is true that Trotsky (if not Lenin) thought that the Russian Revolution could set off a revolution in Germany, but all that it did was to split the German Social Democratic party into three, spark a brief and abortive Soviet Republic in Bavaria, and send the Russian army marching toward Warsaw, where it was defeated by Marshal Pilsudski. (The Soviets got their revenge later by making the pact with the Nazis and annexing sections of Poland.)

The Russian Revolution took place in a backward peasant country, barely beginning to develop industrially, and composed of more than a hundred different nationalities. Lenin, whose first book was *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, thought (given his Marxist schematism) that a Soviet Russia had first to pass through a stage of "state capitalism." But when this obviously meant a cruel policy of "primitive accumulation," Lenin retreated, and the theory emerged later in the disguise, with Stalin, of "socialism in a single country." (Trotsky, more straightforward than the others, called at one point for "military socialism" while waiting, like Godot, for the world revolution; he always had Germany on his mind.)

What actually emerged could not be socialism in any classic sense of the term. It could only be "raw communism" (such as Pol Pot sought to instigate in Cambodia) or a bureaucratic despotism, complete with new elites and a privileged class, yet disguised by a quasi-religion ("the march of History") as fashioned by a Georg Lukács or by that "minstrel of the GPU" as Ruth Fischer called him, Bertolt Brecht (as a chilling instance, see his play *Die Massnahme*).

All of this was rejected by the Western socialist and democratic movements. But it did become the model for the murderous Baath parties of Iraq and Syria, the "Marxist" regimes of Ethiopia and Mozambique, nationalist and militarist regimes that needed the name of "socialism" to cloak their intellectual nakedness and to deceive the Sartre-ist intelligentsia of the West. In Asia, the revolutionary student elites combined with the peasant movements, linking nationalism and Marxist visions, as in China and Vietnam, to unite their disjointed lands against the colonial powers, and won. But the long march of building an industrial "socialism" in backward peasant societies has proved too dusty and tedious—a long march indeed.

In the West, the industrial proletariat, the "historic agency" of the universalist future, is rapidly withering away, and a new kind of

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postindustrial order, based on new intellectual rather than machine technology, is emerging.

What is the point of this tiresome tale? It is that the "cunning of reason" has taken its revenge on those who placed that phrase on their banners as they set off on the march of History. And the world has had to pay for it in this most cruel of centuries, where the wars of ideology (and the internal inquisitions) have been more devastating, and on a wider scale, than the wars of religion ever had been.

What is taking place now, however, is not the victory of capitalism per se; it is the defeat of central planning and totalitarian state controls and the upsurge of democracy. Since 1975, we have seen country after country that had been authoritarian, or under military dictatorship, or under quasi-totalitarian rule, asserting a desire for free and democratic institutions, and in bureaucratic regimes, for civil society against the state.

The list is impressive, and almost no section of earth has been immune: Portugal, Greece, and Spain; Uruguay, Argentina, Chile; the Philippines and Cambodia; Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and, for a brief shining moment, China, where the Statue (not Goddess) of Liberty, with its image derived from the United States, not France, stood as the symbol of the desire for freedom. A century and a half later, one can say that a specter is haunting communism, the specter of democracy.

And yet, much of this may be too late. The rapidity of economic change, the new scales of markets and trade, and the technological leads of Japan, the United States and (if it works) a "United States of Europe" may make it difficult for the nation-state system of Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East (with its compounding irrational hatreds) to compete against the *continental* economies now emerging. (A recent UN report stated that a basket of African exports is worth today one-half what it was ten years ago; and if one omits oil from Nigeria, it is one-third. Primary commodities are of lesser importance as technological substitution—for instance, fiber optics for copper—proceeds.)

The issue is not capitalism versus socialism but the ability of democratic regimes to manage their economies so as to provide for growth, protect their environments, safeguard the welfare of the disadvantaged, and help other struggling countries to feed their people and find some viable path of development.

The problem today is not the outmoded ideological controversies from the nineteenth century but the contradictory currents, centripetal and centrifugal, of a world economy, more and more interdependent, with national polities that are fragmenting. From a historical vantage point, the most significant fact of the last quarter of the twentieth century is not the great power confrontations but the large number of civil wars, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, as well as the disintegrative threats of ethnic rivalries in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and other countries of Europe, as emerging nationalisms seek political autonomy.

Socialism, in the classic sense, has not failed, for it was never tried. It remains, like all ethical creeds, an ideal, a measure of potentiality and possibility, against reality. That has always been the function of utopia. The mistake was to assume that utopia could come down from the mountain and assume human form.

The sociological problem today is the creation of viable social and political entities that give people some control over their lives—in the polity, in the workplace, in the community—a civil society that is tolerant and pluralist. But is that utopia as well? □

Mandela

We rejoice, with many others, over the release of Nelson Mandela after twenty-seven years in a South African prison. His release is testimony to the persistent demand of the black majority for democratic rights. Although the South African government now seems ready to make some concessions, it is clear that the struggle for freedom in South Africa will be long and difficult. We shall return to this subject in a later issue.

—Eds.

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George Konrad

CHANCE WANDERINGS

Reflections of a Hungarian Writer

What happened to us between 1956 and 1989? Not much, only our time passed by. We did go back to see the more tepid and longer version of the same old show. Restrictions on our freedom of expression and movement were rather exhausting. We were compelled to waste too much time on pseudo-problems. Today, however, I do not find the resulting turmoil to be tiresome. The scene is full of respectable characters burning with ideas and fixations. They all want something strange and particular; they're all obsessed; their activities make every one of our days eventful. I am observing the latest, reemerging kitsch. A pigeon is bobbing its head, a dog is flapping its dark beard; I am sitting on a massive, white bench in Vérmezö. There are still hearts pierced with arrows carved into the mossy bark of tree trunks. Any of my writings can now be published, and our dissident past has been put into the perspective of an ironic fairy tale. In a little while we will become relics of a bygone era, reminiscing veteran codgers.

The democratic opposition has made its way from underground literature to the television screen. Our time spent under communism has become an object of humor, nicely framed and ready for viewing. I can see a healthy ambition and thirst for power in the new politicians: pure morality and service to the community are driving them to reach for the highest shelves. When schizophrenic outsiders become self-satisfied insiders, you can be sure that a bird has flown out the window. Listen to the ones who only two years ago kept wisely silent; today, at every chance they get, they rattle off the entire repertory of the opposition. The

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fashionable figures of the previous regime are anxious.

I am interested in clarifying the rules of the game and not in the replacement of the players. I've been to several meetings lately; there are a lot of angry people around. Not surprisingly, only what's been pent up in them can be pouring out of them now; they tell you about their lives, about the irreparable injuries done to them. When the world is rational, one is not angry and does not fight; then there is no task left but the pleasant maintenance of our daily lives. I often hear that we've missed the boat, that we've no time left. What don't we have time for? I'd like to know. For the paralyzing anxiety of the past half century did we have time? Only for this little freedom we don't have time? Nothing is more distasteful to me than urgent business.

* * *

On several occasions I've been the moderator of discussions at the Liberal Club. These fiery and attentive club members are rather peculiar individuals; still, we are of the same mold. Why am I a liberal? Because I am skeptical about everything human, about our collective self; because for me there are no institutions, persons, or concepts that are sacrosanct or above criticism. Because in human thinking I recognize no obligations or taboos. I demand freedom even among my circle of friends. I have that now; they listen to me with interest. For me, liberalism is, first of all, a style: worldly, civilized, personal, ironic. It's not important that everyone should have power over some other people, but it is

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important that everyone be able to speak his or her mind.

* * *

Look at our iron curtain, how full of holes the poor thing is! I was in Sopron on August 19 when the East Germans, carrying champagne bottles and Hungarian flags, streamed through that dilapidated gate—it would have seemed more in place in an old farmyard than at the East-West border—sweeping aside the border guards, who only shrugged their official shoulders. Children climbed up into the watchtowers, old gentlemen produced wire cutters from their briefcases to snip away bits of the iron curtain; rumor has it that these small fragments are now being sold in America for a dollar a piece.

I was also given some of these prickly bits of wire, looking like bizarre flowers. Hoping to lose them, I left them in the hotel room; a zealous attendant found me and made me take them. We had a Pan-European picnic: wearing folk costumes and riding outfits, the Austrians came in droves; there was plenty of mutton stew and goulash, improvised wine stands, tents set up by the Democratic Forum as well as by the Free Democrats, lots of speeches from several platforms, manifestoes in different languages, problems of translation. Walpurga Hapsburg brings her father's democratic greetings; a Schwarzenberg prince is also indescribably democratic in his views.

And how will this issue be taken care of, how will that problem be treated?, suspicious and anxious people are asking each other on the field of great consumption as they throng among the wine and beer tents. Equestrians are riding around and around. And look how normal this walking in and out of counties has become in a short month; soon it will be legal. Last night one thousand East Germans crossed the border, legally, showing their passports. At dawn in my hotel room I was turning the radio dial, the mass border-crossing was the lead story on several stations. One German politician suggested that the Hungarian people be recommended for the Nobel Peace Prize. We're not used to such emotional and touching Kudos; the last time we got them was back in fifty-six.

* * *

On the shore of Lake Balaton, out on the veranda, we're having supper. With their eyes sparkling, my two young sons are eating and lavishing royal praises on Jutka, my wife. We're enjoying the Zöldszilváni wine of Balatonboglár. Yesterday we were still in Budapest; lots of handshakes, milling around, confusion, questions from behind hand-held cameras. We have returned from our adventures; travel and movement are only memories. The great silence that has settled about the veranda is broken occasionally only by the sound of a falling walnut; I am waiting for a sentence to appear. Quietly the spinning wheel goes round and round; slowly I spin the yarn; I'm in no hurry. I don't want to convince anybody. Here, I calm down, I am relaxed, almost happy, and wish for nothing extraordinary. During the last few months I have been rushing about, trying to cope with many obligations.

When viewed from Budapest, ours seems to be a nervous little country, but not so from here, from the lake shore. Things are beginning to work; I can go back to my desk. Success is more exhausting and more detrimental to good work than failure. In public forums we speak for the sake of speaking; we participate in a conference at which we prepare yet another conference. Letting yourself be sucked into it, you immediately become a prey of the cultural machinery. All these years the communist cultural machinery was unable to swallow you up; now you'll let the democratic one do it to you?

From time to time I catch myself saying things that I know in advance will please my audience. I walk out on stage, face a few hundred people, and speak. Five minutes earlier I had no idea what I was going to say. Before the speech I avoid talking to anyone, merely mumble, make noncommittal sounds, have something to drink, and then take the microphone into my hand. I try to survive the journey through my own verbal labyrinths. If you do your job the way you're supposed to, you won't have time to meet many people. Here, in this borrowed garden, all ties peel off me. I'm not in a hurry, that's why I have time, and my nervousness is gone, too. For a long time now I've been planning to buy a country

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house, but I always wind up renting one. I'm not the owner type. I'd like all my necessary possessions to fit into two travel bags. In the morning I ride my bike to get fresh milk and rolls. The bicycle is the only vehicle still in harmony with human dignity. From the veranda I see the waning moon. Confidently I look up; yes, Lord, soon we'll be flying.

* * *

Nothing is decided yet; I don't know what the next word will be. Strange how the spatial flitting of the mind results in two-dimensional lines on paper. Every moment of your life you are standing at crossroads facing a million possibilities. "Bliss is a journey of self-revelation into free space, into the light," said a blind photographer who even in the summer months used to walk around in a black hat and a red scarf. Is the truth of his statement weakened or strengthened by the fact that he was blind? Yes, I believe that he longed to be in the light. You say that human desire and human truth are inseparable? That no person can have an objective view of another? That not by an iota does raging hatred diminish the verity of brotherly love? I don't know. Perhaps there is in us—as the master who conjures pictures out of light claims—a captive bird that longs to soar. I, however, also insist on gravity and earthly weights; I cling to a ground-floor point of view that can well distinguish between black and white.

The blind photographer said, "Both knowledge and pleasure are multiplications, existence multiplied by infinity." A woman in the same company replied sarcastically, "Why do you think that multiplication is a more mystical course of action than division? This faith of yours in a liberating flood of light, my dear photographer, is for schoolchildren. I, for example, do not court the love of known gods. Unlike them, I do not wish things to turn out in one particular way or another. Whenever I want something, or am afraid of something, I know I am in bad shape. I prefer chance meetings to prearranged ones. Maybe there is a bird in me, as you say, but I know that there is also a dust-eating serpent inside me."

The blind photographer lifted his face into the light, and the grimacing lady, glancing in all directions, noticed the red summer apple in my hand that I was about to offer to her.

* * *

Sounding like an old typewriter, an experienced woodpecker is constantly at work in the garden. Writing can also be slowed down; let the water trickle between two words on the pebbles of the shore. For a few moments, but only for a few moments, you are blessed with the perfection of being in your proper place. The water hurls itself against the rock, not angry, only lashing at the smooth surface. The sun deck, this wooden island in the lake, is filling up with more and more blond bodies; they know that this is the time to be on summer vacation. A white sailboat crosses the scene way upstage; on the lawn a sunbathing woman forms a five-pointed cross. The far shore is shrouded in a nacreous vapor. The sunbathing wife removes the top of her bathing suit; the husband is surprised momentarily, then tries calmly and for a long time to look at the smooth surface of the water. Their small daughter lowers her feet into the water, then quickly withdraws them; the water is still cold. I feel like moving on. Slowly I amble away; I do not wish to leave this tranquility for any turmoil. Neither depression nor fanaticism is a desired state. In times of revolution, the erstwhile depressed masses swing over into fanaticism. This time the Hungarians are obviously not in a raging mood. My fellow passengers are skeptically attentive. At the moment everything is history; our books, printed a few years ago and considered illegal at the time, are now shown on the television screen. Who would have thought? Only what has turned into fairy tales can survive. Friends come to visit, they all tell their own stories, giving it everything they've got; everyone is given a chance to perform his or her solo while the rest are listening; now we are all O.K., like equal members of a jazz band. This house is old and beautiful; it has green shutters and in the back a large veranda looking out on the depth of the garden.

TRANSLATED FROM THE HUNGARIAN BY IMRE GOLDSTEIN □

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SOCIALIST VOICES IN THE SOVIET UNION

Here are two influential Soviet reformers, known for their fundamental criticisms of the society and their desire to move toward some form of democratic socialism. Yuri Afanasyev is a historian and member of the Supreme Soviet; Tatyana Zaslavskaya is a sociologist. We take these statements, with permission and thanks, from an interesting new book, Voices of Glasnost, *edited by Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina van den Heuvel (published by W.W. Norton), which consists of full-length interviews with a variety of Soviet reformers and intellectuals.*—EDS.

The usual idea that we have some kind of socialism today, at least some kind of deformed socialism, doesn't hold up to historical scrutiny or logic. We no longer have Stalinism in the top leadership, but we still live in the system Stalin created in the 1930s. If we really believe that socialism is a precious idea, we cannot take an on-the-one-hand and on-the-other-hand approach to that period, as so many people do. We can't say Stalin was both bad and good. We have to recognize the full extent of the so-called deformations he introduced into our life. They affected everything. Stalin repealed the New Economic Policy (NEP), which Lenin saw as a way to socialism. Stalin transformed the Bolshevik party into some kind of sect and created a huge bureaucratic state apparatus. In the course of collectivization, he enslaved the peasantry and destroyed it as a class. Stalin imposed a regime of discipline on the workers, suppressed the intelligentsia, created millions of prisoners under the control of the NKVD, and built a state on blood and terror. I do not accept this totalitarian course as inevitable, necessary, or socialist. It was counterrevolutionary and it affected the foundations of the Soviet system. We are not dealing with a deformed socialism but with an inhumane, regimented system whose foundations still have not been eradicated. *Perestroika* must uproot all vestiges of Stalinism from our life. Therefore, half-truths about the past will lead to half-measures today, which will lead to the collapse of our last chance to break out of this terrible situation.

Only conclusions based on the full historical truth can give conscious supporters of perestroika the strength and theoretical approaches to start again on the road to true, democratic socialism. Here I must protest the formula, widespread even among supporters of *perestroika*, that we can simply return to Lenin, repent, receive his blessings, and move onward. That is a foolish way of thinking, more of a religious idea than a political-historical one. We must return to the basic principles of Lenin's socialism—democracy, humanism, market economics, civil peace, and the rest. But Lenin didn't live long enough to develop a full conception of socialism. He changed his thinking in the early 1920s and had only begun to work out a new model, based on the NEP, when he died in 1924. Nor could Lenin have foreseen, almost seventy years ago, all the problems of our time. Could Lenin have imagined, for example, that in 1989 we would still be rationing food and only just learning democracy? We must move forward with Lenin's help, but we will have to find our own solutions to our problems. And we still must work out a full conception of socialism. Here too *perestroika* means beginning the work of building socialism anew.

YURI AFANASYEV

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Everyone understands that we began these revolutionary reforms because we had reached an economic dead end and we had to find a road to real progress. The country had entered a crisis. It was lagging behind the world economically, technologically, and scientifically, and mass dissatisfaction was growing more acute. So everyone also understands that restructuring the economy is our most pressing task. But I remain convinced that the primary reasons for the need for *perestroika* were not the sluggish economy and rate of technological development but an underlying mass alienation of working people from significant social goals and values. This social alienation is rooted in the economic system formed in the 1930s, which made state property, run by a vast bureaucratic apparatus, the dominant form of ownership. By the 1980s, fifteen to eighteen million functionaries administered this statist system, from Moscow to the thousands of enterprises. For fifty years it was said that this was public property and belonged to everyone, but no way was ever found to make workers feel they were the co-owners and masters of the factories, farms, and enterprises. They felt themselves to be cogs in a gigantic machine.

Maybe this system was necessary in the 1930s, when the country was so terribly backward. The majority of the working class came from the countryside. Workers were uneducated, knew only their narrow slice of life, and had nothing. I don't know. Personally, I think the Stalinist 1930s were our Thermidor, when the socialist revolution was thwarted and Stalin carried out an anti-Leninist *coup d'état*. The claim that socialism was being built camouflaged the emergence of some other kind of system, maybe some kind of Asiatic despotism. Now we have to squeeze Stalinism out of ourselves drop by drop.

I do know that this system no longer works because people have changed enormously in the last fifty years. Now they are educated and well informed. They have a much higher standard of living, apartments, free medicine, free education, and they don't have to work hard to get it. The bureaucratic-command system can no longer direct and control them. Man is resilient—you push and he pushes back. The bottom is no longer willing to work efficiently, and the top can no longer force it to do so.

Therefore, if we want people to be creative, productive, and efficient, we have to change the whole system of social relations. That is why I say *perestroika* must be a social revolution. It must bring about a fundamental redistribution of power, rights, freedoms, wealth, and control of property among the various strata and groups that make up the Soviet Union. It must democratize social relations. That is also why *perestroika* cannot be carried out only from above. It requires broad participation and activism on the part of the masses. I would even say that *perestroika* must be a second socialist revolution in the Soviet Union. This will shock some people, but it is not so strange. The revolutionary transition from feudalism to bourgeois capitalism went through several stages over many decades. What I want for my country is real not fictional socialism, where people can be happy as creators, not just as consumers, and where they will be able to pursue all of their talents. Where people will feel like human beings and not feel constantly oppressed.

In particular, we have to open up new social-economic roads for millions of people that will allow them to identify with the means of production—to feel they are the owners and masters of property and that their income depends on how it is used.

TATYANA ZASLAVSKAYA

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Erazim Kohák

CAN THERE BE A CENTRAL EUROPE?

Ten years from now, will there still be a Central Europe? Or will Europe's center, suddenly reemerging as the Soviet tide recedes, find itself submerged once more by a Western tide? The end came so abruptly: what now?

Amid the euphoria sweeping the streets of Prague, that question seems rather beside the point. There is literally everything to be done, and all of it at once. The Communist rule lasted too long: we can no longer fall back on the *status quo ante*. It ended too abruptly for a new social texture to have grown gradually within the old. Now everything is to be done, and as to the question, what next, the answer is obvious: "Budem žít!" We shall live, just live, live at last.

That answer compresses into two words the longing of the weary years when life, constrained by arbitrary rules, became an unceasing, wearying effort, when there was no spontaneity. Ever since the Soviet occupation, we have lived a laborious charade. Those Western commentators who favored psychological rather than political or religious imagery for describing communist practice used to describe it as institutionalized paranoia. That, though, described the rulers rather than the ruled. For the men and women in the dreary normalized streets, imposed histrionic personality disorder would be a better metaphor: the fatiguing effort to sustain a facade devoid of all conviction, of all spontaneity, and much more rigid for it. Hence the overwhelming longing—to live in truth, spontaneously, just to be what we naturally are.

But what are we, we Czechs and Slovaks? What are we, simply, "naturally"? Humans, after all, are the most unnatural of all animals, devoid of a secure instinctual basis for their social interaction and their individual lives. Far more than instinct, it is custom, the precipitate of history, that shapes our spontaneity. Our language is Slavic, yet our history, more than a millennium of it, is Western. We shall live naturally: for a Czech, that so clearly means, "We shall rejoin Europe."

For Czechoslovakia, like the putatively "Eastern" Germany, like Poland, like Hungary, was never an "East European" country. The cultural boundary between Europe's East and Europe's West has always been quite clear. It is demarcated by orthography. Wherever the Latin alphabet is used, the cultural identity is distinctively Western, shaped by Latin Christianity, by scholasticism, by the Renaissance, by the struggles of the reformation and the counterreformation, by the Enlightenment, by industrialization, and by social democracy. When, early in this century, Romania switched from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet, it was making a cultural statement. Europe's East, demarcated by the Cyrillic alphabet, has a very different cultural heritage, rooted in caesaro-papism, in Orthodox Christianity and czarist autocracy, shaped by the very different struggles at the border of Europe and in the vast expanses of Asia. Muscovy, Krivia, the Ukraine, that was Europe's East, and Central Europe was never a part of it.

For years in America I had to deal with the question, "When did you come to the West?" I could only answer that I was born in the West, in Prague, the city of two Holy Roman Emperors, of a great medieval university, the cradle of the Reformation and the focus of the Renaissance north of the Alps. I would have given the same answer had I been born in Hungary's Debreczin, where Comenius once taught, or in Latvia's Riga, where Immanuel Kant's works were first printed. The "East bloc" was always a wholly artificial

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entity. With its collapse, we shall obviously rejoin Europe.

Yet here the doubts emerge. The daily reality of the Europe we would rejoin is rather different from the Europe as a cultural ideal so dear to dissident essayists through all the years when a triple tier of barbed wire prevented closer inspection. A Polish-Czechoslovak conference held in Wroclaw last November focused those doubts. The topic was "Culture Perplexed:Between Communism and Consumerism." None of the participants manifested the slightest trace of nostalgia for communism, not even of the "reform," "Euro-," or "human face" variety. Forty years were enough, thank you. Yet the consumerism that seems to have largely displaced the European cultural ideal west of the erstwhile Iron Curtain is profoundly problematic for men and women who for so long lived for the ideal of life in truth, sacrificing even such consumer ease as communism could offer for its sake. They struggled and sacrificed for an ideal. To them, it would be tragic if Central Europe, so recently freed from the imposed histrionics of "real socialism," were just to sink into the mindless consumerism of the Atlantic basin.

Can Central Europe find a different drummer? Twenty years ago, it might have been a socialism with a human face. Today, it is too late. Given enough men and women of vision and good will—and there are such—some form of humanized socialism might yet survive as a reality, softening the harshest aspects of capitalism, but, in Czechoslovakia at least, it cannot function as a slogan. In a recent survey conducted in the DDR, 89 percent of the respondents answered in the negative when asked whether a third way between communism and capitalism is possible. Perhaps wholly coincidentally, the percentage of positive answers corresponds to the percentage of the employees of the SEP and the *Stasi*—the Communist party and the secret police—in the total population.

To be sure, Germany is a special case. The DDR, or "German Democratic Republic," was never more than the Soviet zone of Germany under a different name, devoid of any distinctive cultural identity. To be sure, both for the sake of European stability and of easing the transition, there is good and sufficient reason for supporting the DDR as a separate entity as long as it retains any domestic viability. How long that will be, however, is open to question, and once domestic support for a separate DDR evaporates, it would be rather unwise to insist on preserving it by external force. Like the post–World War I occupation of the Rhinelands, it could serve only to focus German resentment. Though Germany's small neighbors may be so fond of Germany as to want to have two of them, imposing an artificial division on an unwilling German people would be most likely to lead to a replay of 1870—and so of 1914 and 1939—in the not too distant future. Europe's safety can surely be better served by integrating a united Germany in a united Europe than by perpetuating its division. There are simply no historical, cultural, or ethnic grounds for a separate "East" Germany. In the long run—and the longer, the better—the Soviet zone, a.k.a. German Democratic Republic, really has no alternative to "rejoining the West."

What, though, of other Central European countries, of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic republics? Here a strong sense of national identity might well buy time, generating transitional configurations that could make the transition less abrupt. The Austro-Hungarian cooperation of recent months holds out much promise. If augmented by Czechoslovakia, it might provide the protective environment that the old Hapsburg monarchy failed to provide. Were such a configuration to prove attractive to Poland and the western portions of Yugoslavia, it might well provide the breathing space within which Central Europe could find a distinctive identity.

Would it, though? Milan Kundera to the contrary, the idea is problematic. In the twentieth century, "Central Europe" was the slogan of German expansionism. Is there, can there be, a distinctive Central Europe based on anything more than a nostalgia for the old Hapsburg monarchy? Here confident answers would be the height of folly. At most, we can speak of straws in the wind.

Yet straws there are. Because I am a philosopher by trade, it is the philosophical straws I notice. The entire tenor of the Czech

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dissent, whose most prominent figures are playwright-philosopher Václav Havel and priest-theologian Václav Malý, has been on *life in truth,* the Socratic call echoed by Edmund Husserl and Jan Patočka. In word and deed, Czech dissidents have demonstrated their deep conviction that there is truth, that there is good and evil—and that the difference is not reducible to cultural preference.

That unwavering conviction contrasts sharply with the philosophical development of the Atlantic basin in recent decades. Here the prevailing drift of philosophical thought is clearly toward a cultural relativism once associated with the sophists and their disillusioned suspicion that "truth" is no more than individual preference or collective consensus. Highly influential French philosophers like Foucault and Derrida argue that human discourse can only refer to other discourse, a text to another text. The American philosopher Richard Rorty concludes that truth is the shared conviction of a community of speakers, and American popular culture reduces it to a matter of "how you feel about it." When Czech philosophers call for a life in truth, convinced that there is truth and that truth shall prevail, putting their lives on the line, they are marching to a very different drummer.

Philosophy, to be sure, may seem simply a Czech peculiarity. After all, the man who articulated the Czech cultural heritage in the darkest time of the Thirty Years' War, Jan Amos Komenský-Comenius, was a philosopher, and so was Tomáš G. Masaryk, the man who restored Czech independence in our century. Yet even if the rest of Central Europe does not share the Czech passion for philosophy, the beat of the different drummer is still clearly heard. While the Atlantic littoral has grown increasingly secular, regarding the world as random and only conventionally constrained by morality, Central Europeans are flocking to churches, rediscovering the world as morally ordered.

A sociologist might well explain this phenomenon as an aftereffect of the forty years of communist rule, and that may well be the proximate cause. Yet the phenomenon has much deeper foundations, in the different foundations of modernity in Central Europe and along the Atlantic littoral. For France and England, modernity began with René Descartes and his successors, who presented the West with a vision of "objective" reality as an aggregate of extended objects, devoid of value and meaning, only spatially and causally ordered and obeying only mathematical laws. The mind, with all it involves—truth, goodness, beauty—had no place in their scheme: it was relegated to a separate mental entity of dubious reality, as, in much later terminology, "merely subjective."

By contrast, in Central Europe, Descartes's great counterpart was Comenius. Now all but forgotten, he was one of the most acclaimed men of his age: Harvard wanted him for its president, the English Parliament for a mediator between itself and the king, Sweden to reform its school system. Comenius bequeathed to Central Europe a very different vision of reality, as intrinsically value-laden and meaningfully ordered. Truth, beauty, goodness appeared to him not as a "subjective" imposition of an ephemeral mind on a value-free, meaningless, "objective" reality but as the intrinsic structure of that reality itself.

In the Franco-English West, a rising natural science, operating with the Cartesian conception of reality best suited to its purposes, largely crowded out all vestiges of the Comenian conception of the meaningful, value-laden world. In Central Europe, however, that conception remained as an option. It reemerged in Goethe, in Schelling, and, for that matter, in a very different guise, in Masaryk, famous for his statement that "Values, too, are facts." When, in 1935, the Moravian-born philosopher Edmund Husserl wrote of *die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*—really the crisis of Western civilization—he located its roots precisely in the Cartesian vision of "objective" reality as meaningless and value-free and of meaning and value as "merely subjective." His conception of the value-laden, meaningfully ordered *Lebenswelt* structured by "transcendental subjectivity"—that is, life's world, rendered meaningful and value-ordered by the presence of life, of purposive, internally governed subject beings—was in effect a proposal for a Comenian vision of the cosmos as a solution for the crisis brought on by the Cartesian conception. The Czech dissident philosophers committed to life in truth and to the reality of truth, goodness, beauty are very much his heirs.

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The crisis of which Husserl wrote is likewise still with us. The conceptual matrix of consumerism is precisely the conception of value as a "merely subjective" matter of individual preference and of "objective" reality as devoid of any value or meaning except as an object of consumption. Its obverse is the conception of humans as devoid of any role in the cosmos except that of consumers. The thinkers of Central Europe, affirming the reality of truth, are living out an answer to that crisis. Could that prove to be the beat of the different drummer, the distinctive vision that could keep Central Europe from dissolving into the consumer civilization of the Atlantic basin?

As a Czech philosopher, I see the task of articulating and preserving that vision as my calling and as the justification of our distinctive identity. But as for many years a New Hampshire man who witnessed America's journey from Eisenhower's "peace and prosperity" through the turmoil of the "me-generation" to the age of Reagan's yuppie affluence, I am all too conscious of the immense momentum of a civilization predicated on an ever-increasing rate of individual consumption. Will my compatriots even want to resist it?

Certainly, locked in a struggle with oppression, they fixed their eyes on a distant star, on a moral ideal—and in the Czech context, that does not mean the shabby "return to family values" that haunts American politics. For the Czechs, it has a Kantian ring. Václav Havel writes of moral motivation that "in principle it means that what we do, we do not for so-called 'utilitarian' motives . . . but because we believe it to be good. Moral motivation leads us to do the good as such, for its own sake and in principle. It is based on a very different confidence than a 'utilitarian' one—on a fundamental conviction that the good is always worth doing."

Will my compatriots retain that vision when they are no longer locked in a struggle with oppression but need to deal with the mundane needs of rebuilding their economy, with the Austrian and German example ever reminding them of the shabbiness of their lives and of the glitter of affluence? It will be so tempting to give up the vision of the true, the good, the beautiful, to sink into the ease of consumerism just to the west of us. We are, after all, Westerners. In Czech journals published abroad there are already voices presenting the fashionable cultural relativism as one of the achievements of the advanced West. Full shop windows seem so much more pressing a need than ecological concerns or social justice. The very idea of seeking to preserve a distinctive identity seems to have little utilitarian justification or hope of success. Why even try?

I know of only one answer, that of Comenius, Masaryk, Havel—that the good is worth striving for simply because it is good. In ten years, will there be a Central Europe? I do not know. But it is worth trying. □

To Our Contributors:

A few suggestions:

(1) Be sure to keep a copy of your ms—the mails aren't always reliable. And please remember that we can't return articles unless they're accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility. No dot matrix submissions, *please*.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print.

THE EDITORS □

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Josephine Woll

"LITERARY" UGLINESS IN RUSSIA

The Russian Republic's section of the Union of Soviet Writers has become known as an enclave of nationalist xenophobia. A partial transcript, printed in Ogonek *48, 1989, of its sixth plenary session demonstrated this orientation. The following text combines cited and paraphrased excerpts from* Ogonek, *with explanatory notes where necessary. The first group of comments refers to the publication, in the monthly magazine* Oktyabr *(October), of a five-page excerpt from Andrey Sinyavsky's 178-page book,* Progulki s Pushkinym (Strolls with Pushkin). *Sinyavsky himself regards the book as his homage, however idiosyncratic and ironic, to his beloved Pushkin. The translator's comments are bracketed within the material or italicized.*—EDS.

Scenes of the Sixth Plenum of the Writers' Union of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR—Russian Republic), Nov. 13–14, 1989

STANISLAV KUNYAEV [Essayist and currently chief editor, *Nash sovremennik* (*Our Contemporary*), a monthly magazine of politics and the arts]: Dear friends! The role of our Russian magazines [that is, magazines published under the auspices of the RSFSR Writers' Union] is one of unification. And . . . I simply want to say that we [at *Nash sovremennik*] have recently published a whole series of works from the Russian Federation.

In contrast, I will tell you that the journal *Oktyabr* [October], also a Russian magazine and one with a larger print-run, published not a single line in 1988 by a writer or poet of our Russian Federation. I understand why. Magazine space is precious, and it was given over to works by members of the third emigration: Sinyavsky, Sasha Sokolov, [Sergey] Dovlatov . . . [Kunyaev implies that these authors were chosen not because of merit but because they were previously forbidden fruit.] I—as a Russian writer, pained on behalf of all Russian literature—am wounded. After the publication of Sinyavsky I can no longer publish in the kind of magazine *Oktyabr* has become. (*Applause*)

Sinyavsky's *Progulki s Pushkinym* is Russophobia and an affront to Pushkin. It is perfectly clear that this is hooliganism of a serious sort. With consequences. It may begin with Sinyavsky, but then it continues: just a few days ago the press reported an outrage committed against the Pushkin monument in Kishinev. It's a chain reaction . . . and very logical. D'Anthes [the Frenchman who killed Pushkin in a duel] can be forgiven, he didn't know against whom he was lifting his hand. Sinyavsky and *Oktyabr* know. . . . Let Ananev [*Oktyabr*'s editor] . . . start a new magazine, called the *European* or *European Home*, and let Ananev or Sinyavsky or both of them together run it. But this is our magazine, and we certainly will not give it up to anyone! (*Applause*)

YUVAN SHESTALOV: Someone is trying to destroy our spirituality. And today I want to repeat these words: "The fatherland is in danger!" . . . I have traversed Russia from Kola to [Kamchatka] and what I saw is that people are reading Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin, and not Abram Tertz! [Sinyavsky's pen name] (*Laughter, stormy applause*)

ANDREY TURKOV: I didn't much like the excerpt from Sinyavsky's book that *Oktyabr* published; I haven't read the whole book. It struck me as frivolous, I read it with irritation. But probably because Russians as a rule don't bear grudges, I have been somewhat surprised

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and dissatisfied by much of what I hear in this auditorium. [Turkov tries to suggest that some of Russia's most cherished writers "and patriots" occasionally expressed a sense of despair about Russia; he is repeatedly interrupted by angry outbursts from the floor.]

YURY BORODKIN: Socialism and the fatherland are in danger. (*Applause*) . . . Our fatherland in this context *is* Pushkin. If it were possible somehow to challenge these people to a duel (*applause*), then it would probably be much easier for me. . . . A wave of poisoned words is spreading across Russia! I know there are not a few among you who were simply unable to read *that* [Sinyavsky's excerpt] through to the end. We must expose it, we must challenge that powerful wave, otherwise how will we stop it from spreading among people of bad conscience, Russophobes all over the country? . . . Let's show what we're worth. On every score—as Russians, as writers, as publicists, as men, goddammit. Most of us sitting here are peasants after all—so let's show our guts. [The words "masculine" *(muzhskoy)*, "peasants" *(muzhiki)*, and "courage" *(muzhestvo)* all have the same root in Russian.]

VLADIMIR ARRO [a representative from the Leningrad branch of the Writers' Union]: When the body of Russian literature is burning and bloodied, how can people allow themselves to organize such campaigns? Isn't it clear that sooner or later they lead to nothing but chaos? It used to be that when writers were worked over at meetings, it was because of coercion, pressure, often from the party. . . . Nowadays nobody is giving orders to the Russian Secretariat. It's preparing to execute a magazine on its very own initiative. (*Indignant cries and noise in hall, shouts: "Stick to Pushkin!" "Get to the point!" "Enough demagogy!"*) The Leningrad writers' organization bears its share of responsibility for literary and ideological reprisals of the past. We have Zoshchenko and Akhmatova [major Russian writers persecuted under Stalinism] on our conscience, and Brodsky. (*Noise, cries of "Shame!"*) It is a dishonorable legacy. That's precisely why I was asked to announce at this plenum that Leningrad writers will not participate in a single "criticism session" [euphemism for public condemnation] of writers or publications. No matter at whose command and no matter how desirable the ends. [After Arro's statement, interrupted more than once by angry cries, a letter supposedly bearing 18,000 signatures is read aloud. It comes from several Leningrad writers' groups that have broken off from the official union Arro represents. The letter refers to "the libelous work of that undisguised Russophobe Sinyavsky . . . against the Russian genius." Claiming that the editorial board of *Oktyabr* and its editor Ananev "have forever stained their name before the Russian people," the letter writers "consider their behavior incompatible with the title of writers of Russia, and demand that the magazine's staff be removed." Thus far the campaign to remove Ananev from his editorship has not been successful.]

SERGEY VORONIN [a Leningrad writer who belongs to one of the groups that signed the letter]: There is a lack of elementary respect toward us, Russian writers, on the part of a Russian-language group of writers, the overwhelming majority of whom are of Jewish nationality. This lack of respect can be explained by the fact that we Russian writers comprise only 20 percent of the Leningrad organization. Not more than 80 people, out of 430. . . . We Russian writers had no choice but to leave the Leningrad writers' organization and create our own association. [To applause, he asks the plenum to recognize his association, *Sodruzhestvo* (Community), as the official and legal organization of Leningrad writers.]

ANATOLY BUYLOV: This is how low we've sunk! . . . Such a vast nation, suddenly [reduced to pleading], "Just let us worship our own god!" How could we have come to this point?! . . . Why are we dragging this out? It should be settled once and for all, without any nonsense about liberalism! (*Applause*) . . . Let's take a look at the virus that has penetrated our system. The virus was injected, and it has spread. The soil was fertile . . . and just look how that virus has metastasized!

Somebody mentioned the Jews, so let's talk about them. Jews are the only nationality, it seems, who have an interest in this discord among us. (*A voice from the floor: "What*

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nonsense! I'm ashamed to listen to you!") [Buylov complains that when a Zionist Committee is established in Moscow there isn't a word about it in *Pravda,* whereas *Pamyat* is continuously denounced in the press.] I'm not speaking about Jews, there is something worse than Jews—cosmopolitans! This virus could nurture a mass of such cosmopolitans. . . . On my own I came to wonder, why are they everywhere? I was told—because they're smart. Well all right, good, I agree. They are smart. But then why have they led us down a blind alley? (*Laughter, applause*) [Buylov attributes to Gorbachev an estimate that Jews occupy 20 percent of the leadership posts, but] . . . we should triple that, because of the ones who have different last names and hide behind another nationality. [Several speakers support *Sodruzhestvo*'s call for recognition.] Arro [distressed at what will ultimately result in, he says, Nazi-type categories of purity]:

> Comrades, dividing writers into "clean" and "unclean," "Russian" and "Russian-language" is impossible. Russian culture does not deserve this.

YURY BONDAREV [novelist, co-chairman of the plenary session]: The issue is the moral and spiritual atmosphere in your organization. It is sick. Do you understand the problem? Do you understand what kind of microbe, what kind of epidemic is infecting you? Do you understand what kind of virus? That's the problem. . . .

The transcript continues for several more pages. One or two members came to the support of Arro. Most did not. When Aleksandr Rekemchuk attempted to read a letter from the liberal writers' group *Aprel*, charging specific journals with sheltering the most extreme elements and claiming that Judeophobia has become the programmatic basis of all the activities of the leadership of the RSFSR Writers Union, he was interrupted by catcalls and shouts to sit down. Buylov was reprimanded by the chairman, not for the substance of his remarks but because his fervor transgressed the norms of "civilized" discussion. Buylov's most ardent advocate was Tatyana Glushkova, a woman who considered that she was "risking her life" to express her views in this "heroic, mortally dangerous contest, . . . just as much as a Palestinian, as someone in South Africa who protests against the Pretoria regime. . . . How long will Russian writers, lawful sons of the Russian soil, . . . groan under the heel of the oppressors and usurpers? Russians now need support a million times more than Jews." At the request of Vladimir Karpets, the audience stood in memory of all murdered Russians, "beginning with the tsar's family"; in deference to nonbelievers, he did not ask them to chant the portion of the religious funeral service in memory of the dead.

One elderly poet, Mikhail Dudin, sadly remarked that the hatred he heard all around him could only engender more hatred. He pleaded for an end to the hatred. He was whistled and laughed at. These were his final words: "I came up to the dais to say this to you: Look at yourselves, look in the mirror. Let each one take a look and, horrified, ask: where are you going, what are you doing! That's all that I wanted to say to you."

—TRANSLATED AND PREPARED BY
JOSEPHINE WOLL □

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Jerzy Surdykowski

WHAT DOES THE LEFT HAVE TO OFFER?

An Independent Voice from Poland

The old disputes between right and left still stir emotions. In one of the first European parliaments, His Majesty's opponents sat on his left (clearly, the worse side), while the supporters of Dynasty, Law, and Order were seated to his right. Today, the [Communist] party that until recently claimed the exclusive right to govern Poland now increasingly lays claim to what it calls "the traditions of the left." It proclaims its goal to be "a coalition of left-wing forces," although until now it has preferred hegemony to coalition. This party no longer has a monopoly in the left, however: in late 1987, despite still severe repression on the part of the Security Service, the Polish Socialist party re-formed (although it soon split as a result of a dispute).

At the same time, the miserable political and economic reality of "actually existing socialism" [communist rule] means that the ordinary citizen endorses everything that is rightist and anticommunist. This is why the numerous semilegal parties and groupings now emerging compete to see how far they can distance themselves from the "reds." This process is reinforced by what is taking place in the "normal world," where the last few years have brought a loss of impetus among the political currents usually regarded as leftist. It is in the economy that the right has enjoyed most success, and economics is decisive everywhere, not just in Poland.

After all this, does the left have anything to offer? If we were to take seriously the traditional parliamentary division, before the formation of the Mazowiecki government, the political landscape would have looked as follows: on the left, the Democratic Revolution wing of the Polish Socialist party, Fighting Solidarity, and the Liberal-Democratic party, "Independence"; slightly to the left, the Confederation for an Independent Poland; and on the far right, the Polish United Workers' party [Communist]. Now, however, all place themselves in the center or, at most, slightly left of center.

It is more useful, therefore, to characterize the left by its ethos, the slogans and values leftist groups proclaimed in their days of glory: national independence, free elections, independent trade unions, abolition of censorship, workers' self-management, freedom of speech and association, social welfare, an eight-hour day, higher wages. After more than a hundred years, in a country that called itself "socialist," these were also the demands of a trade union [Solidarity] that scrupulously deleted "socialism" from its program. On the other hand: the dominance of the state over society, the centralization of political power, respect for authority, law and order, censorship, the elimination of "wrong-thinking" associations—

Jerzy Surdykowski is a well-known Polish journalist and former vice-president of the Polish Journalists' Union. Following the imposition of martial law by the Jaruzelski regime, he wrote for the underground press and for the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. This article, slightly abridged in English, first appeared in the Warsaw weekly *Polityka*, October 14, 1989.

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aren't these the classic slogans of the authoritarian right? Yet it was under precisely these slogans that this trade union was attacked in December 1981 by a party claiming to be "socialist."

The question is, then: does some kind of left still exist, or have we become trapped into thinking in stereotypes?

The road leading from the stockyards of Chicago, the textile mills of Manchester, the wretched workers' suburbs of Paris, and the slums of London to the "affluent society" of today has been long and winding. The notorious "specter" that haunted Europe in the mid-nineteenth century was not conjured up by the devil but by human beings protesting against an inhuman world. Moreover, the plight of the working class, deprived of political and union rights as well as the most basic human rights, was of no concern to anyone—churches, governments, the propertied classes, even the middle classes. Socialists provided the only words of comfort in the dark, the only hand stretched out in friendship. Only socialism offered solidarity and hope and—like every hope—utopia. Anyone who refuses to recognize this not only disregards history but also forgoes the possibility of understanding what happened later. It is not surprising that the only explanations such people can offer are incantations about the work of the devil, "the Hegelian plague," or a "Jewish conspiracy."

Only the socialist movement raised the issue of the humanization of work and the dignity of the worker—until John Paul II referred to them in his encyclicals. One nineteenth-century work does contain the following statement: "A handful of rich and powerful people has virtually enslaved a vast number of workers." This is a quotation not from the *Communist Manifesto* but from the papal encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, issued in 1891 by Leo XIII. It was written more than fifty years after the works of Charles Fourier and the followers of Saint-Simon, fifty years after the uprising of the Lyons textile workers, forty-three years after the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, twenty years after the bloody suppression of the Paris Commune, two years after the formation of the Socialist International. The isolation of the socialists must inevitably have shaped the ethos of this movement and its activists, who were possessed of the sole truth and absorbed in sectarian struggles.

Moreover, the movement emerged during the pontificate of Gregory XVI, the most reactionary pope in modern history, an enemy not only of the "socialist heresy" but also of any kind of free thinking and an ally of the despotic rulers who had partitioned Poland. Until the time of Leo XIII, the first reformist pope, who took office in 1878, the Vatican saw no alternative for labor other than to subordinate itself to capital, whereas the conquered nations of the world were to submit to those who ruled by "divine right." Except for the American Protestants, it was no different in the other churches; they loyally supported those who wielded power.

It was, then, inevitable that socialists would be anticlerical. They also had a noble vision of a utopia in which it would be possible to ensure social justice here, on this earth, and that could be achieved through revolutionary transformation of the social order. Their understandable anticlericalism was directed against the very essence of the "opium for the people," which held out the prospect of justice in the next world, ceding this world to the power of money and autocracy. Socialists became atheists, enemies of God, and it could not have been otherwise. This is the origin of the first myth of the left: 150 years ago, it took umbrage at God, and that's how things stayed. Those who argue that this antipathy derives from the scientism of the Enlightenment, whose offspring were the founding fathers of socialist doctrine, perceive only part of the truth—or rather they prefer not to see the other part, the part that today's church finds so shameful and painful: the church's indifference to the misery of its flock.

If capitalism had turned out to be unreformable, if social relations had remained more or less as described by Marx, if the situation of the working class had remained much as it was portrayed by Dickens and Zola, then Marx's predictions would have proved correct. Humanity would have made the leap from the "kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom," though it is hard to say how this

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kingdom would have been organized and who would have sat on the throne. At the end of the nineteenth century the already powerful socialist movement faced a dilemma: to achieve what it could through reform or to aim irrevocably for revolution? This dilemma opened the door to changes that would save capitalism, although socialists didn't realize this at the time. The bourgeoisie in France, Germany, and England was in no hurry to make a pact with the rabble, to recognize the trade unions as a partner, or even to accept the principle of one man, one vote. The bourgeoisie undertook reforms not out of enlightenment but under pressure from a powerful socialist movement and from widespread workers' protests. Here we could cite a long list of tragic episodes: from the uprisings of the textile workers in Lyons and Silesia, the uprisings of 1848, the Paris Commune, the shots fired at workers in Chicago (which provided the origin of the May Day parades), to the revolutionary ferment on the eve of the First World War. Many Poles prefer not to recall these events; we are quite happy to note simply that West European and American workers all own a car and support Reagan, Bush, or Thatcher.

Marx's predictions turned out to be wrong—precisely because they were effective. After all, it was the socialists, the enemies of God and capital, who, as both reformists and revolutionaries, turned out to be the agents of change that gave birth to the West as it is today. Even if they made a mess of everything else, they deserve a monument for this.

The clear division of the socialist movement into reformist social democrats and revolutionary communists at the end of the nineteenth century was based on differing perceptions of the political reality of the time. Note the pronounced geography of this division. In the industrialized West, where the socialist movement had a large working-class base, social democracy, with its notion of peaceful social change, came to the fore. Where the economy was weak and workers were few in number—as in Russia and the Third World—a group of intellectuals spouting revolutionary phrases alienated themselves from the society in whose name they claimed to act. In these countries, the only possibility of achieving power was through the collapse of the state as the result of war, foreign intervention, or other circumstances. Lenin's oft-repeated phrase about the need for a conscious revolutionary elite to "raise" the consciousness of workers and peasants served simply as a justification for a dictatorship over the proletariat. Thus was bolshevism formed. Stalinism did not arise because of the character defects of the Great Linguist and his entourage in the Kremlin: it was the inevitable consequence of the Bolshevik state and the monopolistic party that Lenin created. This system can be found in a number of versions, some more benign and some even more cruelly repressive than Stalinism. But no other system is possible when an "enlightened" elite seizes power in the name of an "unconscious" majority which is denied a voice in the affairs of the country.

Here we come to the most dangerous myth of the left, especially the communist left, and one that it shares with many who are by no means leftists: the desire to construct on earth an ideal state, one of the oldest dreams of humanity. At one time it was envisaged that such a state would come about with the primacy of religion and would be ruled by priests or by an aristocracy "singled out by God." It was Plato who came up with the first vision of an ideal secular state in which power would reside in the hands of philosophers who would know best what their stupid fellow citizens needed in order to be happy. In the communist utopia, it is the workers who are predestined to rule, or rather the avant-garde party. In the fascist utopia, the master race. Plato was sufficiently farsighted to demand the expulsion of poets from his city-state, on the grounds that they were by nature dissidents. Sooner or later, the gulag appears in the middle of the Platonic heaven, no matter how noble the intentions of its founders. Every political utopia has to create "the new man." If persuasion is insufficient, then use force.

Karl Popper, in his *The Open Society and Its Enemies,* coined the phrase "enchantment with Plato." This enchantment is shared by totalitarians of all stripes, right and left. Perhaps they are enchanted by a noble dream and perhaps

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they have simply succumbed to a gnostic delusion, but we pay an unacceptable price when our rulers nurture utopian visions of any kind.

Some socialists who consider themselves democratic and antitotalitarian have also become "enchanted with Plato" by nurturing hopes for a "better kind of socialism." No one has ever succeeded in constructing a system that would both deserve this name and give people at least a little more spiritual satisfaction and material prosperity than any other system. Socialists have had their greatest success in counteracting the excesses of capitalism. Today, when many people are searching for a "third way," a "self-governing republic," or similar constructs formulated under the slogan of "the democratic left," they too are echoing, however faintly, Plato.

The left isn't getting a good press these days. It should, of course, be noted that the Western "neo-right" of today—particularly in the United States—has little in common with the traditional, elitist, and aristocratic right of the kind we are used to; it has become a populist movement, based on opposition to the excessive growth of the bureaucracy engendered by the "welfare state." Nevertheless, the world is turning to the right.

If the citizens of a democratic state vote into office a conservative-liberal political party (in the European sense), taxes go down, state expenditure is reduced, and limits are placed on the growth of the state apparatus. Liberals tighten the screws on the trade unions and increase the prospects of unemployment. Economic growth accelerates. Although wage earners are initially happy with the new prosperity, they soon begin to feel the effect of cutbacks in social expenditure, of a less humane social system. Among those who feel threatened are old-age pensioners, students and academics, and those who depend on welfare to make ends meet. As a result, the social democrats return to power, raising the level of social security and reducing the most glaring inequalities. They prove to be more generous toward education and culture, but society pays for this generosity with an increase in taxes, expansion of the bureaucracy, a slowdown in economic growth, and increasing inflation. The left does better in power during a time of economic prosperity; it does less well when belt-tightening measures are required.

Because perfection is not an earthly attribute, neither left nor right possesses the ideal recipe for managing the affairs of state; in solving some problems, they aggravate others. Hence the gradual but inevitable swings in public opinion and electoral choices. No doubt, in a few years, people will begin to reject the conservatives and liberals, just as they have rejected the socialists. The only problem is that "seasonal socialists" do not realize this, since they do not understand any political process that takes longer than a year. As a result, they are in a panic to change sides, losing all common sense in the process. They cut a truly pathetic figure. In Poland we are faced with a wave of rightist dogmatists who think the answer to every problem is to be found in the market, competition, and unlimited freedom for individuals to enrich themselves. I call these recent converts "utopian capitalists."

But there is another significant development. The social teaching of the church has departed markedly from that of the cautious Leo XIII. It has become, in the version proclaimed by John Paul II in *Laborem exercens*, so essentially socialist (in placing the individual above economic structures, labor above capital) that it goes further than many a socialist. It has become so socialist that it has been attacked by liberals for its collectivism and its disdain for the market, property, and capital.

The wave of today will also pass, as day follows night: this does not necessarily mean that we shall return to the starting point, since during every cycle, each side learns something from the other.

"The problem with social democracy is that it doesn't provide any exciting ideological products with which young people can intoxicate themselves," wrote Leszek Kolakowski. "Yes, I'm a socialist, but I don't know what it means," said Professor Edward Lipinski in an interview shortly before his death. If socialism—understood as an attitude and a way of perceiving the world—does not contain within itself a gnostic faith in the inevitability of a

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Brave New World, if it does not promise all other kinds of happiness, what is left? Can one still be a socialist, knowing what we know now?

There is very little left, but what there is certainly includes several basic values, in which one simply does or does not believe. There remains the conviction that all people are equal and of equal worth, although variably endowed with qualities of body, heart, and mind; that there can be no freedom without justice and that justice without freedom is nothing more than a prison; that humans are not only individual beings but social creatures and thus have certain obligations to their communities; and, of course, a belief in the value of solidarity, the kind that is the most important and most difficult, solidarity with a small "s."

In my opinion, the notion of a socialist system or even a socialist ideology is simply an illusion. All we have is the attitude I've outlined above. In a pinch, I guess you could call it "socialist." This political and personal decisions of this kind of socialist are going to be based on pragmatism. After the experience of the last few decades, it is the only part of the "leftist" heritage worth keeping.

Of course, liberals and conservatives accord priority to other values that are equally impossible to prove and that also are based on personal convictions. They have a right to their opinions. In their effort to impose equally pragmatic solutions based on their own values, they will argue with socialists in the parliament of a democratic state and in the pages of a free press. But they will not argue about ideology, because one has to keep one's distance from the latter-day descendants of Plato—whether left or right. They have caused too much harm to all of us. But it is worth being a socialist for a most prosaic, down-to-earth reason: because socialists are needed to maintain a balance within the boundaries of pluralism. In the same way, liberals and conservatives are needed as a counterweight to people like me.

What about the beautiful visions of the distant future, in both their social-democratic and Bolshevik versions, with which socialists always liked to dazzle us? Unfortunately, we have to leave gnosticism, like our dirty shoes, in the antechamber of democracy. Moreover, what right do we have to determine the world in which our children will live? It is their business. We especially do not have this right in a country that has been forcibly rammed into an artificial, ill-fitting system and has emerged in its current sorry state. Poland needs common sense and pragmatic decisions that have been tested elsewhere in the world, not a new utopia. Undoubtedly, tomorrow's world will become more socialist, if only because of the need to solve so many social and international problems—but that is just my personal belief.

Because the major disputes between right and left about the shape of the world and the ideal state have become transformed over the years into arguments over political programs competing within the same system, which neither side intends to change, what is there left to argue about? Are we all supposed to be friends now?

Not necessarily. The really basic dispute—at least in our part of the world—is between the latter-day descendants of Plato, trying to impose on others their vision of the only correct social order, and those who reject such a vision, regardless of which end of the spectrum it comes from. Humans are either of value as free individuals or simply atoms in a crowd. Political power and the legitimacy of the state derive either from an all-encompassing idea, whether secular or religious, or from the will of free citizens. The division of the world along these lines is by no means identical to the division between East and West, between communism and the rest. It is a dispute between democracy and the entire spectrum of authoritarianism: from the totalitarianism of Pol Pot and the rulers of Albania through the remnants of "Stalinism with a human face" to theocracies like that of Khomeini, tin-pot dictatorships like that of Pinochet, and our Neanderthals of the traditional right. This is not just a dispute about human rights and their interpretation; any liberal despot can grant a magnificent package of such rights and still keep his power intact. It is, I repeat, a fundamental and far from finished dispute between the "open society" and its enemies. Perhaps it is simply a twentieth-century illusion that we are free

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individuals who, by our very nature, possesses inalienable rights, are burdened with duties toward others, and are capable of distinguishing between good and evil.

Most people who have hitherto lived on this earth have not lived in a democracy. It is possible that this will also be true of most people in the future: democracy and freedom do not have their Marx to proclaim them the "highest stage" of inevitable social development. There is no proof that this is indeed the case, other than our vague faith and hope. Perhaps the West of today—with all its dependencies, like Poland—is simply an episode. Perhaps democracy, freedom, and human rights simply constitute a local—albeit ingenious—attempt to swim against the tide of historical entropy. This concept of the state and the individual's place within it—as Churchill aptly noted—is simply the best of the bad possibilities open to us. We have nothing with which to defend it, other than the few values in which we so stubbornly believe and the pragmatic conviction that it works better than any other system.

TRANSLATED BY
JANE CAVE □

dissent

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Lawrence Weschler

POLAND TAKES THE PLUNGE

Will the "Free Market" Help?

FEBRUARY, 1990

During the season of its first flowering, at the outset of this decade, Halina Bortnowska, one of the foremost theorists of Polish Solidarity, characterized the movement as an expression of the country's "subjectivity," by which, she went on to explain, she meant Poland's renewed capacity for acting "as the subject instead of the object of its history." The distinction was a fertile one—and perhaps most evocative at a purely grammatical level. Almost continuously for the past two centuries, and certainly throughout the last two generations, Poland, tragically wedged as it was between the German and Russian dynamos, had been forced to receive the actions of other people's sentences, hardly ever being allowed to initiate any of her own. Things were done *to* her, not by her. If, starting in 1980, Poland recovered her subjectivity, it was precisely through the astonishing transformation made possible when ten million atomized objects began surging as one, demanding as such to be taken into account, indeed to be the ones doing the accounting.

That grammatical formulation in turn helps to clarify what General Jaruzelski and his colleagues were up to with their imposition of martial law, back in December 1981—they were trying to turn all those pesky renascent subjects back into good little objects once again, just so many passive bricks ready for slotting back into The Wall. The drama of much of Polish history during the rest of the decade came to reside in the contest between those two opposed ambitions: the regime's relentless repression and civil society's stubborn resistance.

If I choose to focus on Poland in these remarks, it is in part because I know Poland best, and in part because Poland is out in front, leading the other East European countries, encountering the difficult and perplexing ironies of victory first. And, indeed, it is one of the most perplexing ironies of Polish society's recent triumph that that victory may now be opening onto a new atomization, a new objectification.

While Solidarity, in its first flower, was a decidedly egalitarian phenomenon—its very name tapped into a century-old reservoir of socialist rhetoric, reclaiming it as its own, demanding in fact that it be made *real*—the Solidarity that emerged from the half decade of repression was much less selfless, much less communitarian, much more individualistic, much more in thrall to the romance of the free market.

In part this transformation was one of desperation—the economic situation, already dire at the outset of the last decade, had been rendered all the more calamitous by the hapless paralysis of the ensuing several years. The zloty was plummeting in value, the country sat poised on the verge of a terrifying hyperinflation. Something drastic clearly had to be done, and classic communistic central planning, as it had been practiced everywhere in Eastern Europe over the past forty years, had proved itself utterly incapable of facing the challenge; it had *caused* the challenge; the old model was

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obviously bankrupt. Meanwhile, Solidarity's onetime socialist theoreticians no longer felt they could afford to experiment with such unproven approaches as worker self-management or decentralized community control. Over and over again, they took to explaining how they felt they had to go with the one system that had been tested and proven, and that was the wide-open free market.

As a result, ironically, by the end of last year Solidarity's leaders were about to launch the country into perhaps the most harrowing macroeconomic experiment ever attempted by anyone—a virtually immediate, wholesale shock transition from a centrally planned economy to a vigorously open market. Even the optimists were anticipating at least momentary dislocations for upward of 30 percent of the country's workforce, as inefficient, once heavily subsidized industrial behemoths were forced to shut down: the optimists insisted that most of those suddenly unemployed would quickly find other, more sensible and more productive, work. The pessimists weren't so sure: they anticipated an explosion of worker unrest, the sort of thing they're seeing over in Bolivia these days.

The crash plan Solidarity would be attempting to force through in the first weeks of 1990 was a variation on one first proposed last summer by Jeffrey Sachs, a brilliant young Harvard economist who first introduced himself to Solidarity's parliamentarians as, among other things, the man who a few years ago helped bring an end to Bolivia's horrendous hyperinflation, *virtually overnight,* through the application of a similar sort of radical action plan—combining sudden cutbacks in government subsidies, a balanced budget, stabilization of the currency, privatization of government-owned monopolies (and, incidentally, suspension of payment on the foreign debt, a twist that has hardly endeared Sachs to Western bankers).

At each of his presentations to Solidarity's leaders and legislative caucus, Sachs made a big point of insisting that the projected transition had to be sudden, abrupt, and almost immediate. Gradualism wouldn't do. This contention in particular proved especially controversial: many felt that Poland's hemorrhaging economy wouldn't be able to withstand the shock. At one point, Sachs recalled how Bolivia's finance minister had commented to him that when cutting the tail off a cat, it was best to do so in one fell swoop, rather than through a series of tiny nicks. A skeptical columnist subsequently averred as to how Sachs was proposing to cut the tail of the Polish economy off at the neck.

Still, Solidarity's government, now led by finance minister Balcerowicz, continued refining its plan for a definitive shock transition, to be undertaken at year's end. Solidarity's leaders could not have been much heartened, however, by news emerging from Bolivia in mid-November to the effect that that country's center-left government, responding to the growing labor unrest that their version of the plan had in the meantime engendered, ended up having to declare a state of siege, incarcerating over three thousand labor leaders. Indeed, several of Solidarity's leaders happened to be in the United States at the time (as part of the delegation accompanying Lech Walesa on his spectacular tour), and one evening I got a chance to show one of them a clipping from the *New York Times* detailing these latest developments in Bolivia. "Oh, dear," the man's face darkened. He then asked if he could keep the clipping. "I want to be able to show it to Prime Minister Mazowiecki," he chuckled grimly, "so he'll know what to do when we get to *that* stage of the plan."

In fairness, I called Sachs a few days later to ask him what had happened. He reminded me that even when he'd first proposed his Bolivian plan, he'd told the Bolivians that they lived in an appallingly poor, atrociously unlucky country, one that was further afflicted by hyperinflation, and that all he could promise them was that after they'd instituted his plan, they'd live in an appallingly poor, atrociously unlucky country, one *no longer afflicted by hyperinflation*. If anything, he went on, their luck had proved even more appalling during the last few years than ever before.

But Poland was different, Sachs assured me, Poland had possibilities—if only it could move quickly to stabilize its economy, as difficult as

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that process might initially be. And how, I asked him, did things seem to be going over there in that regard? "Well," he said, "they're inching their way closer and closer to the edge of the diving board, and their knees are trembling."

The question that came to mind, of course, was: Is . . . there . . . any . . . water . . . in the pool? And the answer, frankly, was that no, there was none, at least not at the moment. Even the plan's proponents in Poland admitted as much. They assured their countrymen, however, that the moment they leapt, water would start flooding in—that it wouldn't start flooding in until they did leap, that in effect it would be the leap itself that would provoke the flooding, but that there would be just enough water in the pool by the time they reached the surface to cushion their fall. Trust them.

Thus, for example, as quickly as possible, Poland was intending to create a stable currency at a unified rate. At that moment, late in 1989, while it was true that the average wage in Poland was the equivalent of about $25 a month, it was also true that subsidies and various currency deformations resulted in the availability of such things as energy, housing, transportation, and food staples, for zloties (granted, often at the end of long lines), for a fraction of their Western cost. That's how people survived. Those deformations, however, were all but crippling the possibility of profitability for any indigenous entrepreneurs, let alone for foreign investors. Get rid of those deformations immediately, it was argued, and while it was true that coal would suddenly cost the same in Poland as it did in West Germany and Polish salaries would not have risen anywhere near enough to make up the difference—still, it could be hoped that the new economic conditions would foster a sudden upsurge in entrepreneurial spirit, both domestic and foreign, and that within a few months, in the nick of time, salaries would start rising fast enough to make it possible for people to live.

That was the idea. That was the wager. That was the experiment. "But really," Halina Bortnowska, the Solidarity theorist who coined the subject-object distinction almost a decade ago, told me last summer as these ideas were just starting to be bandied about, "we're not laboratory rats here, and really we've had enough of grand experiments."

Actually, however, Poland was indeed about to revert to being an object once again—this time, the object of a grand economic experiment. ("Really," another theorist commented to me, "economists are too much to the fore these days. It's like the rabbi and the chicken farmer. You know the story? Chicken farmer goes to the rabbi and says, 'Rabbi, Rabbi, my chickens are all sick,' and the rabbi says, no problem, just do such and such. Guy comes back the next day and says, 'Rabbi, I did exactly like what you said, and, Rabbi, two of the chickens died!' Oh, says the rabbi, in that case you'd better do this and that. Next day, the guy comes back and five of them have died. Rabbi says, oh, in that case you'd better do this that and the other. Next day the guy comes back and *eleven* of them have died, so the rabbi offers yet another variation. The next day the guy comes back and says, 'Rabbi, I did exactly what you said, every single detail, and Rabbi, they're *all* dead.' The rabbi is flabbergasted: '*All* of them?' he stammers. 'All of them? Ach, and I had so many more solutions.' ")

Well, a month has now passed since the plan kicked in, the experiment is truly on, and Poland is indeed hurtling. The price explosion has been every bit as staggering as everyone had feared, and morbid symptoms are appearing everywhere. The other day I was talking by phone with one of the editors at *Gazeta Wyborcza,* Solidarity's trailblazing daily, the first such "oppositionist" daily anywhere in Eastern Europe. She told me how they'd now taken to buying their paper in Finland. Which is to say that the price of paper in Poland has already achieved world levels, such that on any given day paper might be procured for a slightly cheaper price in Finland or West Germany or wherever. In the past they'd charged their customers the equivalent of two cents a copy—already a steep price—but now the physical paper *by itself* was costing that much, and they were probably going to have to double their price to the equivalent of at least four cents a copy, this at a time when their customers were being whipsawed by all sorts of

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other real-price increases. People used to grab up every available copy of *Gazeta* as soon as it hit the stands each morning; now they hesitated and dallied and often demurred: print runs were already down from 550,000 to 375,000.

I was reminded of something Eduardo Galeano told me a few years ago in a then just recently redemocratizing Montevideo. "In the old days Uruguayans bought five or six times as many books as they do today," he said. "Then came the national security dictatorship with its pervasive censorship. And now, what the police used to forbid is forbidden by price."

The stores in Warsaw are filling up with supplies and foodstuffs, but at such astounding prices that they often go begging for buyers. This has had certain good effects. Thus, for example, one of my informants told me that now people only buy what they absolutely need. "In the old days," he said, "if you saw a line you automatically got in it, no matter what they were selling, and when you got to the front you'd buy the maximum number of units—say, three blankets per customer—whether you needed them or not: you never knew when they'd show up on the market again. Everybody was doing this and the market was thus completely distorted: of course they immediately ran out of blankets, so the behavior was self-perpetuating. Now, there's a pile of blankets at the store, but they're so expensive you think twice, three, five times before buying even one. But that's okay: maybe that's how a normal market should work."

But this also has a myriad of harrowing effects. For one thing, many people can't afford to buy blankets. A more perverse side effect is beginning to make itself felt in Polish agriculture. Prices for food initially went up so spectacularly that many people simply stopped buying: hams, for example, rotted for lack of customers. Eventually farmers were forced to lower their prices, but this in turn put them in a terrible squeeze, since prices for their fertilizers and tractor rentals and so forth had in the meantime skyrocketed as well. Thousands of private farmers—whose stubborn, valiant resistance to communist collectivization had been one of the distinctive hallmarks of the Polish postwar experience—now stood to lose the small plots their ancestors tilled for generations. It looks like many of them will now be efficiently collectivized by capitalism. Pomerania, meet Kansas!

The experiment, at any rate, is on: Poland is plummeting toward the pool's blank surface. And it's not at all clear that water as yet is pouring in. One of the more notable developments of January, in fact, was the collapse of the biggest projected capitalist joint venture of them all: Barbara Johnson's impromptu scheme to buy up the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. It turned out the price she was willing to offer for the physical plant was ludicrously low, she was only going to be offering the workers fifty cents an hour, and she was requiring that they pledge not to strike for at least five years. The workers bade her an angry no-thanks, but next time they may not be able to be so choosy.

Still, the Mazowiecki government was retaining an uncanny degree of public support as it entered the second month of its crash program. This was in part perhaps because the worst effects of the program had yet to be seen (because of the way Poles actually get paid, they may not be able actually to gauge the full extent of the collapse in their living standards until they try to make late January's paycheck last them through February). It was also in part because the government had been fairly lucky, especially with regard to the weather—the winter was proving unusually mild, so that Poles were managing to avoid the full brunt of the coal price increases. It was in large part because Poles had been claiming all along that they'd be willing to endure terrible sacrifices if only they sensed they were moving toward greater freedom, and even in the face of these considerable hardships, they remained convinced that Mazowiecki and his colleagues were indeed leading them toward a more normal existence. ("Sure, we'll have problems," one fellow had told me back during the summer, "unemployment, factory closings, steep prices and so forth. But those will be the normal problems of normal countries—instead of all these absurd, crazy-making problems that have characterized our lives up till now.") "Normal," in this sense, means something

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altogether different from "normalized," which, as will be recalled, was the endlessly fugitive goal of martial law: the authorities' vain hope that they might somehow normalize the situation of the country, that is, bring it back to its previous pristine abnormality.

And it's also because the Poles throughout this period have sensed themselves at the forefront of a truly astonishing and world-historical region-wide transformation: their own perilous circumstances seemed somehow easier to bear within the context of all the exhilarating things that were simultaneously happening elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

Ironically, this last factor, seen in another light, prefigured terrible problems for Poland's economic renewal. Because now Poland would have to be competing with all those other places for Western assistance and investments. What little water might have been expected to pour into the pool was suddenly being diverted elsewhere—to more promising short-term venues (such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia).

Beyond that, another possible source of "water" was becoming increasingly problematic. From now on, the Poles had taken to telling their COMECON trading partners, no more barter, no more soft currency transactions: from now on, hard cash on the barrelhead. The shipbuilders in Gdansk, for example, would no longer accept payment in worthless rubles (payment which over the years had decimated the financial integrity of their enterprise)—from now on they wanted the Soviets to pay them in dollars or marks. And curiously, the Soviets seemed willing to go along with this demand. Fine, they were saying, and you pay us in hard currency, at world rates, for all the oil and natural gas we export to you. Poles, like most Eastern Europeans, have long lived under the delusion that the Soviets were simply bleeding them dry: in fact, the situation has been considerably more complex than that. (The Soviet dominion was in fact that unique historical perversity, an empire in which the center bled *itself* for the sake of its colonies, or rather, for the sake of tranquility in those colonies. Muscovites always lived poorer lives than Varsovians.) Poles will have to buy Soviet oil and natural gas (or else, somebody else's oil and natural gas, at the same world price), but it isn't at all obvious that the Soviets will feel compelled to buy often second-rate Polish goods at hard-currency prices.

So that even though the Polish pool has been receiving sudden emergency infusions of hard currency from the International Monetary Fund and the U.S. Congress and the Europeans and the Japanese—and even though a certain amount of indigenous entrepreneurial spirit is indeed kicking in—still, the economy has simultaneously sprung a series of distressing leaks and it is not at all clear, still, what will be awaiting the Poles as they complete their dive.

The outcome of the entire experiment is still very much up in the air.

The point about this specific experiment in any case—even assuming it does work—is that it is requiring that the Poles abandon their earlier solidarity, that they start behaving as atomized, ruthlessly self-interested free-marketeers: each workplace squared off against the next, each individual squared off against his neighbor, as little government intervention as possible—survival of the fittest. "The Triumph of Capitalism." There is no doubt that some Poles will do well under the new system—perhaps many Poles will. Assuming the experiment works, a great deal more wealth will be generated (the old system, in any case, proved woefully incapable of generating any wealth whatsoever). The trouble is, the distribution of wealth across society will become more and more polarized, and many Poles will fall ever farther behind. (In capitalism, only the wealthy get to be subjects.)

It is one of the ironies of our age that capitalism appears to be "triumphing" almost everywhere in the world at the very moment when most of those living under its purview are witnessing, for the first time in several generations, a distinct shrinkage in their own standards of living. Some are getting much richer, but the middle class is being whittled away, and the poor are falling ever farther behind. And that's in the "successful" capitalisms—Reagan's America, Thatcher's Britain. As for the Third World, go ask Brazil or the

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Philippines or Mexico about the Triumph of Capitalism.

During the past several years it has become fashionable to speak of "real existing socialism"—socialism as it really came to be lived in the world as opposed to how it was supposed to be lived in some idealized simulacrum. But in exactly the same way as one should consider the operations of "real existing socialism," one ought to consider those of "real existing capitalism." And real capitalism—as a world system—consists not just of Germany and Sweden and Japan and the boutiques along Madison Avenue; it also consists of Mexico and Brazil and the Philippines and the homeless along Madison Avenue. The latter make the former possible.

I say this not out of ideological petulance. Rather, the question the Poles should be asking themselves at this juncture is what role international capitalism has in mind for them. Are they going to be Sweden (as they so fondly imagine, as they are being invited to imagine), or are they going to be Mexico (a continuous source of cheap labor for the emerging Western European powerhouse, a handy threat that its capitalists will be able to use whenever they need to bludgeon their own uppity workers back into line—"Watch out, because we can always just pick up and move our operations to Poland")? It might even be better to be Mexico than to be Poland mired in continuing "real socialist" stagnation; certainly it will be for many people. There may, if necessary, be fresh ways of battling out of the terrible contradictions of Third World–style polarization and exploitation—and if there are, the remarkable Poles, if anyone, show promise of finding their way clear to them.

But I just end up wondering how concerned Western media are going to be, five years down the line, about the plight of Polish workers laboring, for example, in German plants in Gdynia or British-owned factories in Lodz, or for indigenous millionaires in Wroclaw and Poznan. What will become of *that* romance? □

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Abraham Brumberg

HAPPINESS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

An Observer at the "Velvet Revolution"

On the morning of August 28, 1968, I left my Washington home and headed by car for the seaside resort of Rehoboth, Maryland. I remember starting out in high spirits: there was not a cloud in the sky, and I was looking forward to sun and ocean.

Halfway, I switched on the radio for the news. It was grim: a Czechoslovak delegation, led by President Ludvik Svoboda and including the Soviet flunkeys Vasil Bilak and Milos Jakes had just returned from Moscow. With them were Aleksander Dubcek and other leaders of the "Prague Spring," abducted and flown to the Soviet capital a few hours after Warsaw Pact troops occupied Czechoslovakia on August 20–21.

According to Tass, the Soviet Politburo and the Czechoslovak delegation, following discussions "in an open atmosphere of comradliness and friendship," had signed a paper called the "Moscow Agreement." The agreement affirmed both governments' commitment to the "support, consolidation and defense of socialism and the implacable struggle with counter-revolutionary forces." It expressed the Kremlin's approval of the Czechoslovak government's policies and promised that the Warsaw troops would not interfere in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs.

There are events that in a flash illuminate the passing of one era and the birth of a new one. The sight of Neville Chamberlain waving a piece of paper that carried "Herr Hitler's" guarantee of "peace in our times" was one such event. Half a century later, Dubcek et al.'s arrival at the Prague airport was another. As I sat in my car, I did not have to know precisely what had transpired in Moscow, later to be so chillingly depicted in Zdenek Mlynar's *Nightfrost in Prague*. The fact that Frantisek Kriegel, chairman of the Czechoslovak National Front and the only Jew on the Czechoslovak side, failed to sign the "Agreement" was one straw in the wind.

But more. The document ignored the April Plenum of the Czechoslovak party's Central Committee, which adopted the "Action Program," the most important document of the "Prague Spring." It passed over in silence the party's Extraordinary Party Congress, held right after the invasion, which had repudiated the occupation and elected a new reformist Central Committee. It was full of the standard cant about "proletarian internationalism" and promised that all would be well once "normalization" had been achieved. In addition, the Tass communiqué referred to the Czech diehards by their old titles, even though they had been shorn of them a few days earlier. So I knew the jig was up.

In 1968 I was editor of the journal *Problems of Communism*. For reasons professional and personal, I was swept up by the events rocking the communist bloc at that time—the emergence of a dissident movement in the Soviet Union, the student unrest followed by the foul anti-Semitic campaign in Poland, the Prague Spring. In June I had spent two weeks in the Czechoslovak capital, talking to numerous people and wondering whether their dream of "socialism with a human face" would ever come about. I remember asking them whether they thought it safe to see me and whether the secret police wasn't monitoring our encounters. They shrugged off my question with a laugh: One of them, I think it was Antonin Liehm,

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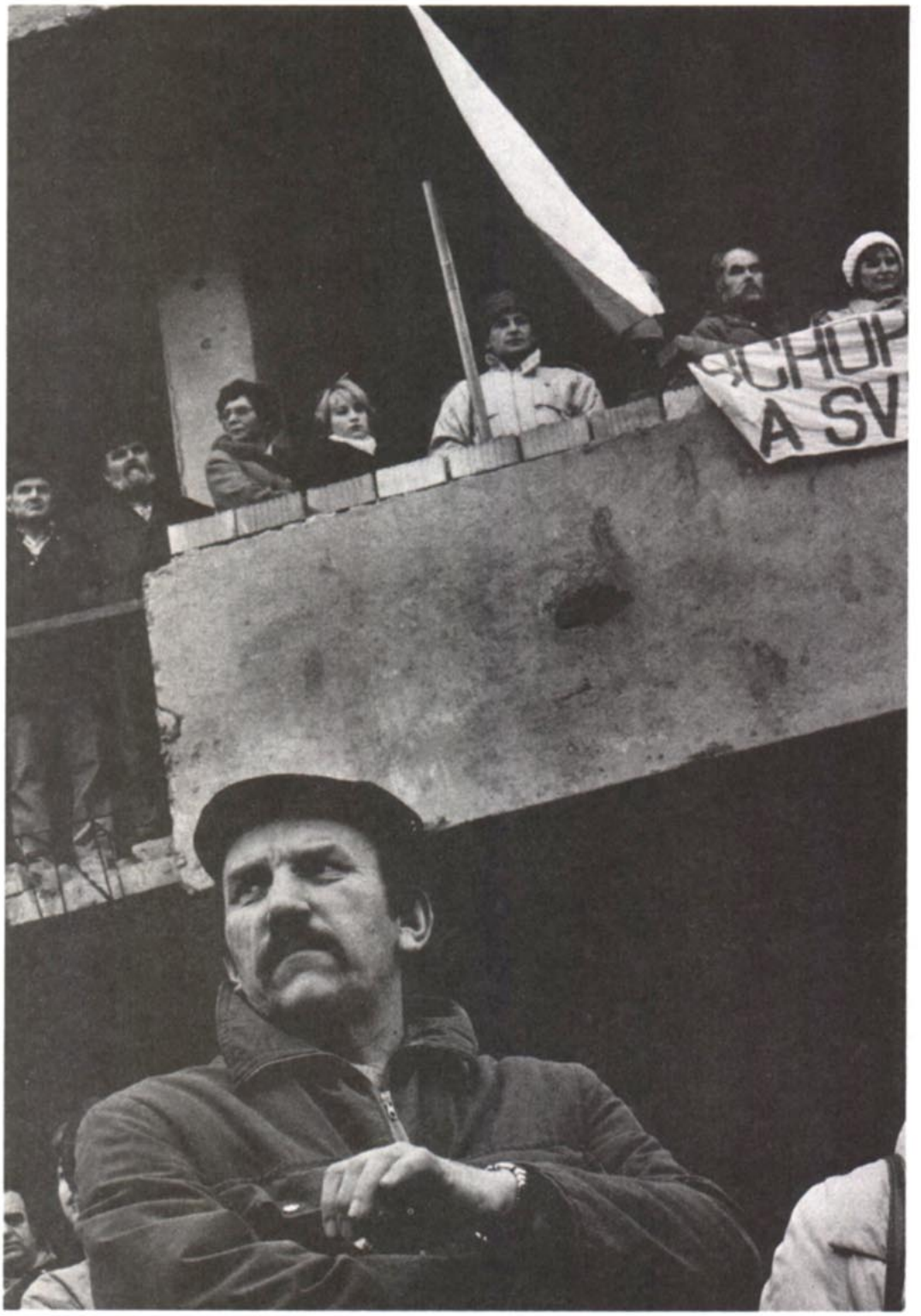

Demonstrators in Prague at the end of November 1989. Henrik Saxgren/IMPACT VISUALS

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blithely assured me that "those policemen are sitting in their barracks, guzzling beer and playing checkers."

Somehow, it was all too good to be true. More than a year later, on the first anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion, I went to Moscow. On that day, *Pravda*'s lead article, reprinted from the Czech party paper, *Rude pravo*, detailed all my movements in June 1968 and fingered me, with two or three others, as one of the main instigators of the 1968 "counterrevolution." I learned then, and in later issues of *Pravda*, that I was a known "agent," a tool of world imperialism and international Zionism, and a "long-time operative of the Israeli secret service."

But all this was to come later. On that fateful day in August 1968, I decided that I must ask somebody with inside knowledge of the Czech and Soviet apparatus to write an article on the "Moscow Agreement" and its aftermath. During the months that followed, as things took their inevitable turn (a stepped-up offensive by Moscow in tandem with its Czech and Slovak allies, successive capitulations by Dubcek, ending with his ouster in April 1969), I cast about for a suitable candidate, finally finding not one but two: Jiri Dienstbier, Prague Radio's man in Washington, and Radomir Selucky, a colleague of the Czech economist Ota Sik, who had left his native country a few months earlier.

It was an audacious idea: to get an article, written pseudonymously by two Czech participants in the "Prague Spring," one of whom—Dienstbier—was contemplating returning to his native country (he did, and I took him to the airport in November 1969), and to publish the piece in what the Soviet press referred to as "a leading organ of anti-Sovietism." I knew both men and was very fond of them. And so at one of those interminable Washington parties, I sprung the question and obtained an instantaneous response:"Yes, happily."

The article, called "The Politics of Retrenchment," appeared in the July–August *Problems of Communism* as part of a series titled "Czechoslovakia: Agony of a Nation." It was signed by "Jan Provazhnik," identified as "the pseudonym of a well-known Czech writer and former member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party," who "has personally participated in some of the events described in his article."

Twenty years after "Jan Provazhnik's" piece, on Christmas 1989, I returned to Prague to meet my old friend Jiri Dienstbier, now Czechoslovakia's Foreign Minister. I had been aware during those two decades of Jiri's role in the Charter 77 movement, of his many arrests, and of his work—literally until the day he reported to the Ministry—as a stoker in a Prague apartment building. (Being a stoker was a choice job among those held by dissidents: it merely involved looking after the building's heating system, and it allowed plenty of time for reading, writing, and conspiring.)

Jiri had grown older—who hadn't? A tall man, he retained his striking good looks and his faintly Schweikian sense of humor. "I recall," I told him after we embraced in the empty palace that houses the Foreign Ministry, "that you seemed undecided, until you stepped on the plane, whether you were doing the right thing to return to Czechoslovakia." He smiled. "Not at all. We had a crazy party that day, remember? And I was too drunk to think straight about anything."

From My Diary

December 26, 1989: Prague is redolent with the "Spring of Nations," wintry breezes notwithstanding. Groups of people gather to gaze at television sets in front of shops and office buildings. Some programs highlight the violent goings-on in Romania; others report preparations for Havel's inauguration. The atmosphere is peaceful, in turn somber and cheerful, but unfailingly good-natured. The young men and women working at the offices of the Občauske Forum (Civic Forum), while visibly overworked, are polite and helpful.

Every inch of wall space seems covered by placards, slogans, bulletins, proclamations, some stenciled, some typewritten, some in print. Havel is everywhere, but I find only one picture of Dubcek. It was different in early December, I learn, when Dubcek was, next to Havel, the most revered symbol of resistance to Moscow and its local henchmen. But the

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"Prague Spring" was becoming increasingly irrelevant. The stores are packed, but with virtually no queues.

And the food, the food! Let a horde of Soviet and Polish tourists loose and there would be mayhem. Tempting cuts of beef, all sorts of sausages, cheeses, canned goods, fruits, vegetables. Similarly with clothing, especially footwear: boots, boots. I buy a pair, for the black-market equivalent of $12. The official rate is nine kronen per dollar, and the unofficial (obtained everywhere) is thirty-five. Every other man who approaches me on Va clavike namesti with an offer to buy dollars speaks Italian. Why? Is Italian the lingua franca of the country's second economy?

December 27: A brief telephone conversation with Dienstbier. I can almost see his smile as he says, "Well, Abe, so you are here!" "A bit of a delay," I say, "twenty years to be exact." He asks me to come to the Ministry the following day, and in the meantime to look up Marlin Palos, a spokesman of the Civic Forum and a good friend of his. In the crowded anteroom there I run into the son of the writer Arnost Lustig, whom I first met in June 1968, and who has been teaching at the American University in Washington. "My father and I," says the young Lustig, "are here for *Life* magazine." I wish him luck and proceed to find Dienstbier's friend.

Palos turns out to be an amiable man in his early thirties, formerly a philosophy student, with an excellent command of English. He too, he says, had worked as a stoker. We walk—or rather run—to a university student and faculty meeting several blocks away, to discuss the expansion of academic exchanges with Western countries. Luckily the meeting, attended by about two dozen serious-looking men and women of different ages, is soon over. Luckily, because even though as I discovered later I can understand Dubcek's speech delivered in Slovak and most of Havel's Czech address, I find it almost impossible to follow spoken conversation in Czech.

Palos gives me various names and addresses and says with a sigh: "You can't imagine what a crazy life I lead. I am absolutely exhausted." "It's not an easy thing to make a revolution," I say. He beams, and when we see each other several hours later, he repeats the phrase.

Back in my hotel that evening, I watch Ceausescu's "trial" on television, with a voiceover in Czech. A hideous spectacle. If there was no way to submit him to a more or less decent judicial proceeding, then he and his wife (whom, in peasant fashion, he orders to keep silent whenever she tries to say something), should have been shot on the spot. Instead, his former military associates sit in judgment over the two miserable creatures, firing questions at them. "Bring me before the Romanian workers," says Ceausescu with icy contempt, "and you will hear them cheering after I have explained everything."

When the interrogation is over, the "court" meets for a brief time, and then orders the culprits into the courtyard to be executed. The two bodies tumble onto the ground. Sic transit gloria Conducatorul and Romania's "greatest woman scientist." I reflect on how lucky the Czechs are with their "velvet revolution": no sign of vindictiveness, no body counts, and a good chance to endow "normalization" with its normal meaning.

December 28: Dienstbier introduces me to two friends—Michal ("Misha") Reinmann, a one-time member of the Czech CP and for the past twenty years a professor at Berlin's Free University, and his Russian-born wife. We chat about the outlook for the future. I ask Dienstbier whether the new government can count on support from the workers. After all, their role had been in question until they laid down their tools on November 27, in solidarity with the intellectuals and students.

Dienstbier is quietly optimistic: the only problems that might arise, he says, would be among the workers in the industrial towns of Ostrova and coal mines of Slovakia. When some of the huge inefficient and pollution-breeding plants as well as some of the coal mines are closed—as they are bound to be—the thousands of unemployed will have to be retrained for new jobs, and care will have to be taken to avoid the emergence of right-wing Slovak (which is to say anti-Czech) nationalism, still a potent force in that area.

Czech workers, too, will find themselves without work, but whereas in Bohemia and

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Moravia the traditions of industriousness have flourished for more than a century, the Slovak workers, many of them barely out of their peasant huts, will find it more difficult to adjust to the new conditions. "But we can manage," says Dienstbier, "the nation is behind us."

Michal Reinmann is less sanguine. "You are not sufficiently aware," he says to Dienstbier, "of the enormous difficulties that lie ahead. Unemployment and increased social differentiation will eventually replace today's euphoria." Among the unemployed will be hundreds of thousands of members of the "working intelligentsia," formerly employed in party establishments, who will become a serious source of discontent.

In addition, there is the danger of German industrial might. Once reunified, Germany, with its economic preeminence, will flood the Czech markets with cheap goods that the Czech economy will not be able to compete with. Furthermore, with living standards relatively low (high in comparison with, say, Poland but low in comparison with Austria or Germany) Czechoslovakia may lose thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of workers to the West. I am doubtful about the latter (and even more doubtful two weeks later, after a visit to Berlin), what with the problems West Germany will face in absorbing the East German economy. But Reinmann's cautionary attitude makes perfectly good sense.

Later that day, I meet with Tomas Jezek, an economist working at the Institute of Forecasting of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and just about to join his colleague Vaclav Klaus, recently appointed Minister of Finance, as his right-hand man. Like so many East European economists and politicians these days, Jezek believes in the "liberal" theories of Friedrich von Hayek. But his commitment to a market economy, I note, is hedged with more qualifications than that of his Polish colleague, Leszek Balcerowicz. In fact, he says that his country can "learn from the mistakes of other East European countries, say Poland"—a clear reference to Balcerowicz's headlong plunge into unrestrained laissez-faire.

Czechoslovakia's situation is incomparably better than Poland's: its industrial potential, despite the obsolete equipment, lack of spare parts, and dearth of even old generation computers, is still in working order; its enterprises ("which of course will have to be cut from the sway of the central ministries") are productive; its rate of inflation hovers at most between 6 and 8 percent, wages have not been rising more than 3 to 4 percent annually, and its foreign debt stands at $6 billion (compared with Poland's $40).

In addition, rather than owing money to the Soviet Union, the latter is in debt to Czechoslovakia to the tune of 6 billion roubles. "We compare ourselves to Austria," says Jezek—a statement that would sound bizarre if uttered by any other East European official. "I am for the complete dismantlement of all government planning," he says, "but of course there are many economists who have different views on what a market economy should be like." He mentions a few names, but I doubt whether I'll be able to see them—time is short. Mr. Jezek, it occurs to me, is the Czech equivalent of a "wet Tory."

December 29: A brief meeting with an official of the National Socialist party—no relation to the German namesake—whose most famous member had been Edvard Benes. Our conservation leads nowhere, probably because his English and German are as bad as my Czech. There is one amusing moment, however. When I ask him what was his party's definition of "socialism," he replies with a mock-anguished smile: "Perhaps you can suggest one?"

Lunch with Miroslav Galuska, a man in his late sixties, an old (now ex-) CP member, who had held an impressive number of posts both in the diplomatic service and in the party apparatus. Like Reinmann, he is worried about possible workers' discontent and the power of the *nomenklatura*—especially since in Czechoslovakia "the Communist Party had a genuine base in the working class." Go to the Slovak mines and steel towns, he says, and you will see that the workers have "very little enthusiasm for Havel and what he stands for."

Galuska provides me with startling information about Czech agriculture: it is totally collectivized, it works, and the peasants are not

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in the least interested in a return to private farming. They produce enough food even for export. Their yields are on the average three to four times higher than before the war, and the peasants retain a vivid memory of prewar poverty.

Not a professional economist, Galuska is nevertheless well informed on the state of the country's economy and is dead set against immediate deregulation of prices and letting the market alone dictate production and distribution. Like Reinmann, he thinks the new government is counting too much on the long-range impact of the current euphoria. (Good politicians, these former Marxists.)

December 30: A loud, joyous, feverish party in the offices of *Ludove noviny*, until recently a *samizdat* publication, now on the way to becoming a weekly and, perhaps eventually, a daily. I meet the other half of "Jan Prohaznik": Radek Selucky, in his native country for the first time since 1968. "This is mad, mad!" he shouts, glass in hand. He plans to divide his time between Carlton University, where he has been teaching for the past eighteen years, and Charles University. I leave *Ludove noviny* a bit tipsy, bolstered in my conviction that Czechoslovakia will make it.

My wife and I spent the last two days in December watching Havel's formal election as president of the republic—solemn, elegant, and welcomed by hundreds of thousands of happy citizens who had massed in front of the presidential *Hrad* (castle)—and later in the magnificent Old Town Square, rubbing shoulders with beaming Czechs, Slovaks, and foreign tourists. We climbed to the third floor of a palace overlooking the temporary stage and watched dances performed by a string of folkdance groups—Gypsies, Slovaks, Moravians, Hungarians, Bohemians. The atmosphere was intoxicating.

On December 31, after another telephone conversation with Dienstbier, we went to the apartment of Rita Klimova, a high-spirited and wise woman in her late fifties, a long-time activist in Charter 77 and later in the Civic Forum. She had just received word from Dienstbier that she was appointed Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States. She was fussing about the lack of any long dresses and total ignorance of diplomatic protocol. My wife told her that if she doesn't have time to shop in Europe, she will take her on an all-day shopping spree in Washington. There were only a few people in Klimova's apartment, among them the elderly Jiri Hajek, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a towering figure in the Charter 77 movement.

A quiet but delightful evening. At midnight, we all raised our glasses to the future of Czechoslovakia and of all the countries in Eastern Europe. And thus the last remarkable week in the remarkable year that was. □

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Vladimir Tismaneanu

IN ROMANIA: BETWEEN EUPHORIA AND RAGE

Why Its Revolution Was Especially Violent

Unlike the other East European revolutions, the Romanian one was extremely violent. It resulted not only in the replacement of a despised ruling family but in the dissolution of all party and government structures. But the drastic nature of these events is sadly consistent. The magnitude of the collective decompression has been directly proportional to the amount of repression accumulated in more than forty years of "proletarian dictatorship." Bereft of power and authority, the Communist party simply collapsed, ingloriously. The party had essentially disappeared the moment Ceausescu and his wife fled from the roof of the Central Committee building in Bucharest's Palace Square on December 22, 1989.

The dictator's flight signified the end of more than four decades of brutal Stalinism. Did it also mean the end of communism in any form? Did it usher in full-fledged pluralism? How can one save a spontaneous revolution from below from being co-opted by those adept in the Leninist techniques of manipulation? How can one explain both the tremendous amplitude of the Romanian revolution and also its failure to engender political forms that would guarantee a break with the past?

Romania was different from the others because it had never undergone de-Stalinization. It had never passed through the process of moving from the absolute rule of one man to the (slightly less absolute) rule of a Communist Politburo. To Westerners the distinction between these two forms of oppression may seem irrelevant, but it is very large to people who live under them. A single absolute ruler, in the mold of Stalin, Mao, Kim Il-sung, Castro, or Ceausescu, means a rule unchecked and unmoderated in its arbitrariness, ignorance, and cruelty. The autocrat enters with impunity upon the most erratic actions. A Politburo, even one made up of cruel individuals, provides a moderating check against the worst depravities of any one member. Compare, for example, Stalin's rule to that of Khrushchev. The former terrorized not only the whole of society but also his closest collaborators. The latter returned to the alleged "Leninist norms of party life" precisely because the party bureaucracy could no longer tolerate Stalinist methods of intimidation and persecution. In the same vein, with all his sins, Erich Honecker was only the *primus inter pares* within a Mafia-like Politburo in East Germany. Ceausescu not only monopolized power, he also dynasticized the Romanian party by appointing members of his clan to top party and government positions. The degree of hatred oppressed people feel toward their masters is bound to be quite different in the two cases.

Some historical background is indispensable here. Nicolae Ceausescu did not emerge out of the blue. He was the product of Romanian Communist political culture, and his extravaganzas did nothing but carry to an extreme its never-abandoned Stalinist features. He climbed the career ladder within the Romanian Communist party (RCP) under the protection of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the party's general secretary between 1944 and 1965. It was

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Gheorghiu-Dej who avoided the de-Stalinization process initiated by Khrushchev in 1956. Ceausescu, who became a Politburo member in 1954, helped Gheorghiu-Dej to forcibly collectivize agriculture and organize repeated anti-intellectual witchhunts. The Romanian Communists, who before the arrival of the Soviet troops in August 1944 numbered no more than one thousand members, preserved an uncompromising commitment to hard-line Stalinism. Both under Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceausescu, the party suffered a painful inferiority complex: since its leaders were perfectly aware that their coming to power was the result of the Soviet diktat, they could not arrive at a genuine source of legitimacy. This was indeed their Achilles' heel: a total alienation from the Romanian nation. Scared by Khrushchev's anti-Stalin campaign, Dej simulated Romanian patriotism and defied Moscow's plans for economic integration within the COMECON. Instead of de-Stalinizing Romania, Dej de-Sovietized her. But by the end of his life, Romania had the potential to become a second Yugoslavia: an impressive economic growth and encouraging links with the West could have been used for a gradual dissolution of Stalinism. Even the national intelligentsia, viscerally anticommunist, was ready to credit the party leadership for the break with Moscow.

Ironically, when Nicolae Ceausescu took power in March 1965, it appeared he would de-Stalinize the party. He condemned the holding of political prisoners, deplored the abuses of the past, and instructed the *Securitate* (secret police) to abide by the law. In April 1968, he rehabilitated Lucretiu Patrascanu, a former Politburo member and Marxist thinker executed in 1954 under trumped-up charges of espionage. He also reinstated into the party many victims of Gheorghiu-Dej's terror and proclaimed the need to write a true history of both the party and the country. It was *glasnost avant la lettre,* with Ceausescu championing a self-styled version of reform communism. At the same time, the general secretary continued to de-Sovietize through his independent line in foreign policy—he distanced his country from the Soviet Union by maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel after 1967 and by vehemently condemning the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

This stance won Ceausescu plaudits and even aid from Western governments. In April 1968, Charles de Gaulle visited Romania and congratulated Ceausescu for his alleged independence. In August 1969, Richard Nixon went to Bucharest, where he was triumphantly received by an increasingly self-enamored Ceausescu. The myth of the maverick diplomat, the super-negotiator and the only trustworthy communist leader, was naively bought by many Western analysts, who glossed over Ceausescu's growing dictatorial propensities. This image also strengthened Ceausescu by allowing him to portray dissidents as traitors.

The president's Stalinist inclinations were catalyzed by a trip he made in May 1971 to China and North Korea. He appears then to have considered the possibility of importing into Romania the methods of indoctrination used during the Cultural Revolution. This was not just a matter of personal preference: Ceausescu was trying to contain the liberalization movement in Romania, curb intellectual unrest, and deter students from emulating their rebellious peers in other communist states. He was also trying to consolidate his personal power and get rid of those in the apparatus who might have nourished dreams of "socialism with a human face." Thus in June 1971 he published his "proposal for the improvement of ideological activity," a monument of Zhdanovist obscurantism. What followed was a radical re-Stalinization and the emergence of an unprecedented cult of personality surrounding, first, himself and then, after 1974, his "evil genius" wife, Elena.

Several thousand people in Romania—the hard core of followers—came to believe the myth that Ceausescu was the demiurge of national dignity and sovereignty. Above all, the myth was believed by Elena, who after 1979 was his second-in-command. Her influence catalyzed Nicolae's Hitlerian personality, expunging the impulses that had prompted his regime's early promises of liberalization. Many of Ceausescu's initial supporters, party apparatchiks like Virgil Trofin, Ion Iliescu,

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and Janos Fazekas; the prime minister, Ion Gheorghe Maurer; and the defense minister-general, Ion Ionita, were marginalized or sacked.

The only criterion for political success in Ceausescu's Romania was unconditional loyalty to the president. A permanent encomiastic deluge was engineered by agitprop hacks: making Ceausescu's name synonymous with communism, the sycophants heaped hagiographic epithets on him. A victim of the mechanism he had created, Ceausescu himself came to believe in his providential role as the "savior of the nation," the "hero of peace," and the "most brilliant revolutionary thinker of all times." In an attempt to ensure his political immortality, he promoted his youngest son, Nicu, to high party positions. The dictator dreamed of leaving his imprint on the Romanian soul. He submitted Romanians to incredible humiliations by forcing them to simulate joy in times of utter poverty and despondency. He presided over the bulldozing of old Bucharest and imposed the building of a giant palace, an apogee of "socialist realist" kitsch. Possessed by an overweening hubris, hypnotized by a self-image magnified to grotesque proportions by the corrupt scribes of the presidential court, Ceausescu completely lost touch with reality.

Obsessed with Hitler, while believing passionately in orthodox Stalinism, Ceausescu merged these two horrifying legacies into a personalized tyranny that ranked with any of this century. Its principal underpinning, and sole explanation for its longevity, was the *Securitate*. Like Stalin, Ceausescu managed to annihilate the party by converting it into a passive body of almost four million members whose sole duty was to worship him. Not only the party, but all sources of independent social life were suppressed. In 1977, when coal workers in the Jiu Valley organized a massive strike, their leaders were captured by the *Securitate* and made to disappear. Ten years later, in November 1987, when street demonstrations took place in Brasov, the *Securitate* intervened, order was restored, and the organizers vanished. Prominent intellectual dissidents were forced into either external or internal exile. There was no possibility of engaging in anything similar to Czechoslovakia's Charter 77 or Poland's Committee for Workers' Defense. An all-pervasive police terror thwarted any attempt to launch democratic initiatives from below. Romania's civil society was almost completely paralyzed.

Under these circumstances, it is understandable that Ceausescu could not be removed so easily as the other East European leaders. There was no institution that could ensure a nonviolent transition from this terrorist dictatorship to a softer version of communism. As a tyrant, Ceausescu had to be removed by tyrannicide—a method with a long and honorable tradition.

Those who organized his execution are themselves former Communists. It is not at all clear why the leaders of the National Salvation Front (NSF)—the ruling body that emerged immediately after the revolution claiming to be a spontaneous popular organization—organized Ceausescu's trial in a manner disturbingly reminiscent of Stalinist frame-ups. Furthermore, there are indications that former leaders of the *Securitate* were among the first to lend their support to the new authorities.

With Ceausescu dead and most of his main acolytes in jail waiting for open trials, the question now is how deeply the process of uprooting his regime will reach. Because the Romanian revolution was a violent one, it is also likely to be thoroughgoing: with its martyrs, it also has its momentum. So far, the signals from Bucharest are mixed.

The Council of the NSF was initially led by a foursome made up of old Communists. Its chairman, Ion Iliescu, studied in Moscow in the early 1950s and was Ceausescu's protege until 1971, when he fell in disgrace for "intellectualism." Presumably anti-Stalinist, he is far from being anticommunist. His model is Gorbachev and his ideal a reformed version of the one-party system. Since his advent to power, Iliescu has not kept these convictions secret. On the contrary, in a conversation with student leaders on January 21, 1990, Iliescu described political pluralism as "an obsolete ideology of the nineteenth century." In his speech, which was not published in the still

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state-controlled Romanian media but publicized by the Soviet press agency TASS, Iliescu claimed that the NSF advocated a "democratic model without pluralism." In this he was echoing not only Gorbachev's opposition to a multiparty system, but also the political philosophy of the NSF's principal ideologue, communist veteran Silviu Brucan.

With surprising candor, Brucan has expressed his deep contempt for Western-type democracy. He is the author of the concept that the recent Romanian revolution is so original that its aftermath must essentially be different from those of other countries. For Brucan, as for Iliescu, terms like socialism, communism, Marxism, Leninism, capitalism, and fascism have lost any sense. They consider the NSF to be a supra-ideological body, a mass party movement, a corporation of diverging but not necessarily incompatible interests. In the light of this outlook, there is no need for other parties to exist and compete for power with the "truly national exponent," that is, the NSF ruled by Iliescu, Brucan and Prime Minister Petre Roman.

The fourth member of the initial ruling quartet, Dumitru Mazilu, resigned on January 26, 1990 in protest against the "Stalinist methods of the new leadership." Mazilu knows something about Stalinism: a former *Securitate* colonel, he taught international law at the University of Bucharest and served as a government-appointed United Nations expert on human rights. In 1987 he smuggled out of Romania a report on human rights violations there. Harassed by the *Securitate*, Mazilu refused to recant and reemerged on December 22, 1989 as one of the leaders of the revolutionary movement.

Is the conflict between Iliescu and Mazilu a simple clash of ambitions? Or are we witnessing an obscure struggle between two groups that secretly conspired to take over power on the day Ceausescu would be deposed? This is only one of the many mysteries surrounding Romania's new government.

In the meantime, taking advantage of the new laws on associations, political parties have started to form. Among them, one can identify such "parties of nostalgia" linked to Romania's fragile interwar democracy as the National Peasant party and the Liberal party. For the time being, the Communists have refrained from trying to reestablish their party, but it is likely that some of their activists will try to emulate the Hungarian strategy and propose the formation of a "Socialist party." Their handicap, however, is that there is little constituency for a group that is in any way responsible for the historical tragedy of the last forty years. As for the Romanian Social Democrats, they have formed their own party, and it is probable that they will attract votes among blue-collar workers.

Learning the democratic process will be difficult in a country with very few democratic traditions. But there are also some encouraging signals: the students, who spearheaded the overthrow of the dictatorship, have created a Student League, which may become a rallying point for Romania's democratic youth. Critical intellectuals of various persuasions have organized a Group for Social Dialogue, whose tasks are to reflect on the country's problems, monitor the government's observance of democratic procedures, and, most important, help the development of a civil society in Romania.

During the first days of the revolution, Romanians engaged in romantic dreams of national redemption. Students and intellectuals were ready to trust the new leaders' pledges of commitment to pluralism. Things changed quickly: the NSF announced that it would field its own candidates in the forthcoming elections; former *Securitate* officers were suddenly released from prison without explanation; criticism of communism (and not only of Ceausescuism) was toned down. More ominously, instead of disbanding the hated *Securitate*, the NSF decided to subordinate it to the Ministry of Defense. Correspondence is still censored and telephone conversations are reportedly tapped.

Mass meetings have been organized to protest what many Romanians perceive as the hijacking of their revolution. During the first stage of the upheaval, the people showed remarkable moderation as the *Securitate* murdered and tortured thousands of unarmed civilians. But if the NSF continues to trample the democratic aspi-

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rations of the population, and if the logic of postrevolutionary bureaucracy prevails over that of a genuine renewal, then one can expect more turmoil. To date, the NSF Council has failed to establish its democratic bona fides. It has committed a number of immense blunders and alienated many of those who could have fostered its authority. Although intellectuals may succumb to a state of resigned malaise, students will not capitulate as easily. After all, without their sacrifices, Ceausescu might have retained power. They will not accept the spilling of their blood to see the replacement of a clique of illiterate Stalinists with one of neo-Bolshevik reformers.

At this critical juncture, with an overcharged political atmosphere and with only a precariously legitimate government, one cannot rule out the danger of a military coup. To prevent such an outcome, independent social forces will have to coordinate their actions in a broad democratic movement. If they fail, frustrated ardor and betrayed ideals may beget a state of collective despair, which, in turn, could generate new waves of popular rage. □

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"Free Markets"

Robert Dahl

SOCIAL REALITY & "FREE MARKETS"

A Letter to Friends in Eastern Europe

The rapid advance of democratization in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, still underway as I write, is surely one of the most extraordinary revolutions in the long history of democracy. Just as no one, to my knowledge, predicted the time or speed of this dramatic transformation, so no one, I believe, can accurately predict the subsequent course of these democratic revolutions. But democrats everywhere are already entitled to rejoice over the enormous vitality of democratic ideas demonstrated by the actions of the people in your countries.

In the midst of our rejoicing over your victories, however, some of us are also concerned, as you must be, over the difficulties that lie ahead. It is not for me to instruct you, who are on the spot and in touch with unfolding events, as to how you might best meet the daily challenges to your efforts to bring about the changes you seek in political life, the economic order, social relations, ideas, and beliefs. But I hope you will permit me to share with you a concern over one of the many issues you confront. This is the question of the place of a market economy in a democratic country.

It is a historical fact that political institutions of the kind you seek and are now engaged in creating—in short, what you and I ordinarily call democracy (that is, actually existing though not ideal democracy)—have existed only in countries with predominantly privately owned, market-oriented economies, or capitalism, if you prefer that name. It is also a historical fact, as I hardly need to remind you, that all "socialist" countries with predominantly state-owned, centrally directed economic orders—command economies—have not enjoyed democratic governments, have in fact been ruled by authoritarian dictatorships. It is also a historical fact that some "capitalist" countries have also been—and are—ruled by authoritarian dictatorships.

To put it more formally, it looks to be the case that market-oriented economies are necessary to democratic institutions, though they are certainly not sufficient. And it looks to be the case that state-owned, centrally directed economic orders are strictly associated with authoritarian regimes, though authoritarianism definitely does not require them. We have something very much like a historical experiment, so it would appear, that leaves these conclusions in no great doubt.

Of course there is an enormous amount of complexity, variation, and qualification packed into my all-too-brief description of the experiment and the conclusions from it. Only metaphorically is history a laboratory; we cannot rerun the experiment at will to sort out all the causal factors. Thus the apparently strict association between dictatorship and the state-owned, centrally directed economic orders of the "socialist" countries is contaminated, so to speak, by Leninism. With its arrogant assignment of the role of vanguard to the Communist party, which in practice means the hegemony of the party leaders (or leader) in a one-party system, orthodox Leninism denies a place to the political pluralism that a country requires if it is to be democratic. Even during the brief period of the New Economic Policy, Leninist

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doctrine led directly to the suppression of opposition parties. In short, independently of a state-owned, centrally directed economy, Leninist political views would no doubt have been sufficient to bring about the suppression of oppositions and the creation of authoritarian regimes.

If the historical experiment is not as clear-cut as it looks, there are nonetheless good reasons for thinking that a predominantly state-owned, centrally directed economy will prove to be incompatible with democracy in the not-so-long run. For such an economic order places enormous resources in the hands of leaders—resources for persuasion, inducement, corruption, and coercion. As far as I know, the only instances in democratic countries of a centrally directed economy (though not widespread state ownership) were the comparatively brief experiences of Britain and the United States in the Second World War, when the need to mobilize all possible resources for the war effort led to the creation of systems of centralized allocations and price fixing. Although these systems performed magnificently in achieving their limited purposes, in both countries they were rapidly dismantled after the war ended—in part because the public would no longer tolerate the restrictions they imposed. Had they endured, I shudder to think of the effects they could have had on American and British political life. In this country, even a scrupulous president would have found it hard to resist the temptation to use his power over the economy to discourage opposition. An unscrupulous president—Richard Nixon comes immediately to mind—might well have used that power in far more sinister ways.

Therefore even if systems of state ownership and centralized direction of the economy had not proved themselves inefficient in meeting the needs of relatively modern, well developed countries—as they clearly have—you would be wise to reject them on the separate ground that they pose a standing danger to democratic institutions. I realize, of course, that to rid your countries of these systems will require a hard, tough, and probably protracted battle; for the changes will be resisted by many people, not only office upon office of bureaucrats but others whose security, income, status, careers, and indifferent work habits depend on the continued existence of these obsolete systems. Conceivably, that task may be so difficult that what I am about to say will seem to you to be almost irrelevant to the immediate situation you face.

Nevertheless, I want to suggest that your path lies somewhere between the economic system you are rightly rejecting and full reliance on a market economy. In urging these considerations, I am reminded of a book published nearly half a century ago that bears rereading today—*The Great Transformation* by Karl Polanyi. Polanyi argued that the visible failures of state intervention in England from the 1790s to the 1830s, particularly the disastrous consequences of the Poor Laws, profoundly influenced the thinking of several generations of important thinkers, from Bentham, Burke, and Malthus to Ricardo, Marx, Mill, Darwin, and Spencer. The lesson many liberal thinkers of the time drew was that state intervention, even for humane ends like the care of the rural poor, was likely to cause far more harm than good. The alternative they should support instead, they concluded, was a full market economy with self-regulating markets in land, labor, capital, and money. And with the passage of Poor Law Reform in 1834, a self-regulating market economy seemed finally to have arrived.

Yet no sooner had it arrived than discontent with its consequences began to bring about state intervention to regulate markets—efforts so successful that Herbert Spencer, an advocate of unregulated market capitalism, lamented the long list of regulatory actions he could compile by 1884: regulations governing food and drink, penalizing the employment in mines of boys under twelve not attending schools and unable to read and write, empowering Poor-Law officials to enforce vaccination, extending compulsory vaccination to Scotland and Ireland, punishing chimney sweepers who compelled boys to sweep chimneys so narrow that the boys often suffered injuries and sometimes death, providing controls for contagious dis-

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eases, empowering local officials to set up public libraries at public expense, and so on. The list extended for several pages. And since 1884 it has lengthened. Even in the United States, which is often thought of as the very citadel of laissez-faire capitalism, to describe briefly all the ways in which governments—national, state, municipal, regional, district, and so on—regulate, supplement, displace, or otherwise alter the operation of markets would take a small library.

Polanyi's account is consistent with a much broader range of historical experiences in the countries where today we find the most advanced and successful market economies: in Europe, North America, Japan, and the Pacific. From the experiences of these countries—to whose political and economic institutions you may now be looking in search of feasible solutions for your own problems—we can, I think, draw the following conclusions.

1. *Many of the criticisms of capitalism advanced by socialists were essentially correct.* Capitalism is persistently at odds with values of equity, fairness, political equality among all citizens, and democracy. Where many socialists went badly wrong was in believing that the evils they saw could best be solved by abolishing markets, competition among economic enterprises, and the seeming "anarchy" of the price system, and by transferring the ownership and direct control of the economy to "the public," or "society," as represented by the state. In Western Europe, however, socialists discovered that they could not achieve these goals; they were unable to replace capitalism with the centralized state socialism many of them believed to be ideally preferable; and they turned their political efforts instead to finding specific solutions to the concrete problems that a market economy inevitably gives rise to. Thus while they never achieved "socialism" in the sense they commonly thought, they did help to make their economies more decent, humane, and just than was the capitalism of Marx's time.

2. *In making their economies more humane, socialist, labor, and social democratic parties contributed to—though they were not the sole authors of—the development of the mixed economies that exist in advanced countries today.* If these mixed economies are a far cry from the centralized systems you wish to dismantle, they are also very far from the classic liberal model of a self-regulating market economy. If you wish to look to the most advanced economies for guidance, then, you should not allow yourselves to be misled by dogma about "free markets." Although the economies of these countries are often described as "free market" systems, they are not. Instead, all the world's most advanced and successful economies are mixtures of markets (themselves of enormous variety) and deliberately imposed government interventions in the market (also of incredible variety).

3. *In addition, a century or more of efforts to arrive at a feasible and politically acceptable mix of market and nonmarket elements has not produced a definitive, stable, or uniform solution.* There is not the slightest reason to think that the search for the best mix has anywhere come to an end. In the United States, for example, we are now harvesting the consequences of eight years of the Reagan administration, during which deregulation and worship of the beneficent effects of the market dominated the thinking, and to some extent the policies, of that administration. We are now engaged in discovering—or rather rediscovering—how much damage can occur if public policies are based on the simple-minded assumption that everything, or almost everything, can be entrusted to the marketplace. In the United States, laissez-faire has been dead in practice for a long time; even eight years of Reaganism have not restored it to life. So we continue to be engaged, as we have been for generations, in attempts to find a more acceptable balance between market and nonmarket arrangements. I strongly doubt, however, whether we Americans, or people in any other democratic country, will ever manage to arrive at a point where market and nonmarket forces are all at a stable equilibrium, politically speaking. Our society, including the economy, is too dynamic to allow for permanence in public policies.

4. *The experience of the democratic coun-*

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tries with the most advanced economies also tells us that no single pattern, or even a dominant one, has emerged; and what has emerged is a product of the special characteristics and the unique history of each country. Thus the Scandinavian countries, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands, among others, have developed what are sometimes called systems of democratic corporatism. The expression *democratic corporatism* is used because economic policies of exceptional consequence are made, more or less beyond the reach of parliament, by agreements among the major corporate entities, in particular the trade unions and employers' associations, sometimes together with organizations representing consumers or farmers. Yet not only do the patterns of *democratic corporatism* differ greatly among these countries, but in others, such as Britain and the United States, "corporatist" structures are comparatively weak, in part because unions and employers' associations are much less inclusive, more fragmented, and more decentralized. The point is that you do not have a single model of relatively satisfactory "market economies" to consider for possible emulation in your countries; instead, you have many models. Each country's pattern to some extent reflects the country's unique, or, at any rate, far from general, conditions and history. Attractive as you may find the Swedish model, for example, you should not assume that it can be transferred to your country, where the necessary conditions may not exist now or in the foreseeable future.

5. *Actual practices in the advanced democratic countries are, then, far too diverse and complex to be captured by ideologies.* Thirty-five years ago, Charles E. Lindblom and I argued that it had become increasingly difficult for thoughtful persons to find meaningful alternatives posed in the traditional choices between socialism and capitalism, planning and the free market, regulation and laissez-faire. Economic organization, we insisted then, poses knotty problems that can be solved only by painstaking attention to technical details. I believe that experience since then strongly confirms this judgment. It does not necessarily mean "the end of ideology." But it does mean that no sensible person should expect an ideology to provide solutions to concrete problems. Probably more often than not, an ideology is not very helpful even as a general guide. To take one example, questions about property and the most suitable forms of ownership admit of no simple answers. "Public versus private ownership and control of the means of production" is no more than a simplistic slogan. Not only do "public" and "private" mask an almost infinite variety of possibilities, but no reasonable person—or society—would, after carefully examining the concrete possibilities in specific situations, conclude that any single form of ownership and control would invariably be superior to all others. Likewise to pose the issue as "planning versus the market" is, in the light of the experiences of advanced democratic countries, simply silly. A good deal of "central planning" exists in these countries, particularly in the form of fiscal, budgetary, and monetary controls. Yugoslavia, by contrast, furnishes an example of a "socialist" country where the absence or weakness of these instruments for central influence over the economy has led to disastrous economic consequences.

6. *It seems obvious, then, that the search for solutions to the problems generated by a predominantly privately owned, market-oriented society has been and will continue to be a major element in the political agenda of every democratic country.* As in the past, the search will take place amidst political controversy. And it should. For even if solutions often depend on technical knowledge, rarely, if ever, is technical knowledge enough. Alternative solutions invariably engage important values as well—equity, equality of opportunity, liberty, security, progress, and community, among others.

7. *Because intelligent choices of public policies require both technical understanding and sensitivity to the values involved, in modern democratic countries a form of specialized intellectual activity has evolved that tends to combine both aspects of policy.* And a rather new type of intellectual has developed to engage in this activity: the policy specialist. Although the locations and functions of policy

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specialists vary among the democratic countries, in the United States policy specialists are now located in major institutions of all kinds, not only in the executive branches of government at every level—national, state, and local—but in the Congress and the state legislatures and municipal councils, in the political parties, business firms, trade unions, lobbying organizations, independent research centers, and universities. Their numbers, variety, and differences in perspectives and institutional loyalties tend to ensure that expertise is not monopolized by any single group, such as the White House or a Congressional committee.

To keep technical knowledge in your countries from becoming the monopoly of any particular group, you will probably need to create and maintain a considerable measure of pluralism among organizations engaged in the analysis of public policies and you will need a supply of well-trained specialists to staff them. For this task, neither ideological perspectives, such as a belief in the need for democracy and a market economy, nor technical knowledge bearing on the specific problem at hand, whether that of economists, engineers, scientists, or whatever, will, by itself, be sufficient.

It is no simple or easy task to manage a market-oriented economy in such a way as to maximize its advantages, which are great, and to minimize its disadvantages, which are also great. How best to do so is, and surely will continue to be, a subject of continuing debate and political struggle. In your own political struggles, the experiences of democratic countries with advanced economies may be helpful to you. But I urge you to avoid the mistake of the classical liberals whose ideas were formed in reaction to the failures of mercantilism and the Poor Laws. Reacting to the failures of state ownership and central direction of the economy, you may be tempted to conclude that the best alternative for your countries is to turn everything over to unregulated markets. Not only would this be a misreading of the experience of the advanced democratic countries; it would be a misfortune for your countries. □

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James Tobin

ONE OR TWO CHEERS FOR "THE INVISIBLE HAND"

Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand"[1] is surely one of the genuine Great Ideas of history, both for its intrinsic intellectual content and for its durable influence on ideologies, politics, and public policies. The proposition that the alchemy of market competition transmutes the dross of personal selfishness into the gold of social welfare is still a powerful message in economics classrooms and in political debates. To be sure, since 1776 the doctrine has experienced ups and downs in popularity. At present, it enjoys one of its strongest and most widespread prosperities.

The symptoms can be seen throughout the world. In almost all the advanced democratic capitalist nations, conservative governments committed to laissez-faire rule the roosts: notably in the United States and Canada, in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, in the other major countries of the European Community (even in France, where the Socialists were forced to fall in step), and in Japan. In the communist countries—China, Eastern Europe, now even the Soviet Union—the new vogue is the promotion of private enterprise and market pricing. The main ideological adversary of the tradition of Adam Smith for the past 140 years, Marxism-Leninism, stands discredited before the world. As a principle for the organization of society and economy, it is a failure. Now it is an admitted failure. Likewise in the "Third World," the success of the economies of Taiwan, Korea, and of other Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) is attributed largely to free markets and free enterprises, while in contrast stagnation is observed in countries where governments intervene with heavy hands. The official policies of international agencies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, make adoption of market-oriented reforms conditions for their aids and credits.

These developments follow and reverse a long period of skepticism and doubt about the Smithian message, even among those who always firmly rejected Marxism and other extreme alternatives. Fifty or sixty years ago the depression in the fortunes of the Invisible Hand was related to the Great Depression of the world economy and then to the pragmatic compromises of market capitalism with social democracy, welfare state institutions, trade unionism, and state planning that flourished before and after World War II. Even governments that by traditional doctrine had eschewed responsibility for fluctuations in economic activity—international, national, regional, sectoral, personal—began to assume more and more responsibilities for them and to be held to account by democratic electorates.

Disenchantment with government interventions spread contagiously in the last twenty years. There were two main reasons. One was the disappointing performance of the world economy in general and of most national economies in the 1970s, in contrast to the

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quarter century of unparalleled growth, prosperity, and stability before 1973. Whether justifiably or not, the disappointments of the 1970s were blamed on the economic doctrines and policies adopted and often praised during the preceding decades. The other reason was the growing disillusionment and cynicism about politics and governments—legislatures, executives, and bureaucracies—fueled by obvious and perceived failures of policies and their execution and, worse, by endless revelations of venality, hypocrisy, deception, and mendacity.

Professional—shall we say scientific?—economics and the economic ideologies of public and political debate are always intertwined. The *Wealth of Nations* itself was both a tract of political economy and a scientific—or, as the author would have put it, a philosophical—treatise. The Great Idea has led parallel lives in the two arenas, public and professional. In the professional arena, the Invisible Hand eventually came to be formalized in the basic theorems of welfare economics—that a competitive market equilibrium is Pareto-optimal and that every Pareto-optimal allocation can be supported by a competitive equilibrium with a suitable arbitrary allocation of endowments among agents. This is a very precise and refined distillate of the sweeping conjectures of Smith himself and of hordes of his successors, especially those in the public arena of ideologies. In any event, the appeal of the Invisible Hand within the profession shares the cyclical fluctuations of its popularity in the wider arena. The same dialectic of revolution, counterrevolution, and synthesis has been repeating itself in economic science and in economic politics.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the popularity of the Invisible Hand in our profession has revived strongly in the past fifteen years. The main target has been Keynesian macroeconomics, as it developed in the first twenty-five years after the publication of the *General Theory*.[2] During that time the mainstream consensus of the profession came to support a synthesis of Keynesian macroeconomics and neoclassical microeconomics. Theoretical misgivings about this compromise burst into full-scale counterrevolution in the 1970s, called by its protagonists the New Classical Macroeconomics. This new old macroeconomics, fortified by Rational Expectations theory, extends the pretensions of laissez-faire to macro theory and policy and undermines the case for monetary and fiscal stabilization policies that most economists, even those opposed to microeconomic interventions, had previously come to accept.

On the micro side too the Invisible Hand was gaining professional as well as public adherence. Supply-side economics, fortified by this new label, greatly magnified previous estimates of the deadweight losses attributable to taxes, transfer payments, subsidies, quotas, price controls, tariffs, and regulations of all kinds. Economists, especially theorists, became much readier to take the theoretical optimality of a free-market solution as a reference point, placing the burden of proof on anyone who would defend or propose a government intervention.

These are influential ideas. Given the overhang of regulations and other micro interventions and the vested interests they serve, it is difficult even for conservative free-market governments to dismantle them. Nevertheless, the spirit of the invigorated Invisible Hand certainly makes a difference. And in macroeconomics it has become quite decisive, especially in Western Europe, where established doctrine among policy makers and business and financial leaders is that governments should never actively stimulate aggregate demand, whatever the circumstances of their economies.

Exaggerations of Exuberant Ideology

Yet there are large divergences of intellectual substance between Adam Smith's Invisible Hand thesis and modern scientific proofs of the optimality of competitive market solutions. Consider several of them:

1. *First, careful economists know that Pareto-optimality, which is all the fundamental theorem of welfare economics can claim for competitive equilibrium, is not necessarily maximization of social welfare.* We know there are tradeoffs between "efficiency" and "equality," to mention just one important kind of

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distributive issue. Maybe real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could be maximized by allowing free rein and untaxed gain to the enterprising, the talented, the ruthless, and the lucky and by leaving the weak, the ignorant, the shiftless, and the unlucky to their own devices and to private charity. I doubt it. But even if it were true it is an unpleasant caricature of a "good society." A system with zero distortionary fiscal or regulatory interventions is a chimera. The question is always the one Arthur Okun posed so effectively:[3] The bucket carrying goodies from rich to poor is always leaky. How leaky does it have to be before the transfer is not worth while?

Even so good a cause as free trade is, in my opinion, exaggerated when it is argued, as it generally is in public debate even by economists, that free trade is obviously welfare-improving. I am not referring to the slim possibility that a country has some market power in international trade that can be exploited by an "optimum tariff" or by strategic gaming in commercial policy. Assuming that free trade is efficient and maximizes the consumption opportunities of a society as a whole, it still can change—relative to any alternative status quo—the internal distribution of these opportunities, not only among persons, sectors, and regions but also as between broadly defined factors of production, labor, capital, and land.

2. *Smith says, and his latter-day adherents repeat, that selfish motivations and local information suffice to guide individual economic decisions in ways that aggregate into social optima.* Modern theory requires much more: simultaneous clearing of a complete set of markets, including those for future and contingent commodities and globally complete information available to all agents. Economic theorists may take methodological refuge in the assertion that every model, including general equilibrium theory itself, is a simplifying metaphor of reality, to be judged by congruence between its implications and predictions and real-world observations. So far there is no convincing evidence of such congruence, certainly nothing that entitles anyone to accept and assert literally the formal propositions of the model.

3. *The Invisible Hand, especially in the general equilibrium version of formal theory, requires that agents lack market power and take parametrically the prices determined for a predetermined list of commodities.* The looser ideology makes a big logical jump in extending the Invisible Hand proposition to all market structures and to competition in products and other nonprice dimensions. The recent complacency in the United States about mergers and conglomerations, the atrophy of antitrust policy to apply only to overt conspiracy, reflect the broader and looser laissez-faire zeitgeist.

Pragmatism in Regulation and Deregulation

These considerations counsel against uncritical acceptance of "free market" and "supply-side" arguments in every application, and suggest that economists adopt more cautious, pragmatic, and discriminating approaches than their ideological and political counterparts.

Of course, a discriminating and pragmatic approach is double-edged. Theory may not be able to prove that a particular intervention is injurious to welfare, but that failure of proof does not justify the intervention. One should be suspicious of advocates of, let us say, lower taxes on capital incomes on grounds of incentives and efficiency when the advocates stand to gain without making any new risky investments. (And likewise of professors who want to raise their own salaries on the grounds that higher pay will attract better talent in the future.) We should be especially suspicious of interventions that seem both inefficient and inequitable, for example, rent controls in New York or Moscow or Mexico City, or price supports and irrigation subsidies benefiting affluent farmers, or low-interest loans to well-heeled students.

I myself think that Invisible Hand theory is mostly irrelevant to macroeconomic stabilization policies. The business fluctuations that give rise to those interventions play no role in the writings of Adam Smith, Leon Walras, and Arrow-Debreu. Whether active countercyclical demand management brings better macro performance than stable policies blind to economic conditions is an intellectual empirical

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question that cannot be settled by pure economic theory.

One thrust of *micro*economic deregulation is justified in almost all countries, the dismantling of institutions that protect privileged individuals from competition. Everybody would like to own a toll booth and grow rich collecting tolls from the multitudes who pass by. As the point is sometimes expressed, people are rent-seekers. Sometimes the bottlenecks and scarcities that yield tolls or rents are natural. Sometimes they are the payoffs of Schumpeterian innovations. Sometimes they arise without government help and are maintained by restraints of trade. Sometimes both the scarcities and the rents are artificial results of government interventions, made to order for political deals and too often irresistible invitations for corruption. In the United States flagrant examples have been on the hit lists of economists in all administrations, liberal and conservative, Democratic and Republican. Even when it can be argued that some deserving low-income persons are beneficiaries of rights to buy or sell at subsidized prices, economists often can show how equal gains could be provided to them in a more efficient manner.

Government and Financial Markets

Undiscriminating and thoughtless deregulation can misfire. As examples I refer to financial markets and institutions. The epidemic insolvencies of savings and loan associations in the United States are a case in point. In the last ten years, after great political and economic pressure, the regulations of these institutions were substantially relaxed. Originally these were mutual associations attracting savings in the form of "shares" for the purpose of financing mortgages in their communities, but later they were allowed to convert to stock companies managed for profit. In the 1980s they were allowed to broaden their asset menus to compete with commercial banks. They were allowed to convert savings shares into checkable deposits and to pay market interest rates to attract them. They were allowed to seek deposits and lending opportunities nationwide. Their supervisory agency, following the spirit of the times, became less strict and less diligent. Yet their deposits were still federally insured, in principle only up to $100,000 per deposit but in practice 100 percent. Thus the institutions, whether sound or unsound, cautious or reckless, honest or corrupt, solvent or insolvent, could always attract deposits by offering high interest rates. If the deposits were invested in risky loans that went bad, no losses fell on the depositors. Losses were borne in part by other insured institutions, whose insurance premiums would have to be increased to help pay off the depositors, and by federal taxpayers, the ultimate guarantors. The federal budgetary cost is likely to exceed $100 billion. The moral is that you can't apply free-market principles to an industry that deals in contingent obligations of the central government.

The fad of deregulation has led serious economists, as well as exuberant ideologues, to propose free competitive enterprise in the creation of money. The idea that "private money" could supersede government money is a ridiculous one. Someone's IOUs have to be those in which clearings take place among banks and other transactors. Someone's IOUs have to be those the government itself will accept in payment of taxes and other obligations and those the government regards as legal tender in the satisfaction of private debts. Once the government guarantees the value, in the country's unit of account, of any private IOUs, then it cannot allow the private issuers completely free choice as to the assets that stand behind them.

Should government take an "anything goes" attitude toward the financial structure of nonfinancial corporations? At the moment, U.S. corporations are being rapidly, drastically, and spectacularly restructured. Firms whose assets were covered 60 to 100 percent by equity are moving to 10 percent equity, 90 percent debt. Some of this refinancing arises from a reduced assessment of the disadvantages and risks of debt obligations, in part because the tax-deductibility of interest was enhanced in value by the 1986 increase in the effective corporate-profits tax rate. In some respect, the corporation as restructured is simply renaming

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as "interest" income what formerly was called "profits." The surprising thing is that such restructurings are the immediate sources of such large increases in the value of the assets over the previous market value of the equities, even after the very considerable deadweight losses of the transactions, the fabulous fees of investment bankers and lawyers. Much of the best talent of the country is engaged in transactions of this kind, and their imminence or possibility preoccupies the managers of companies that should be trying to make better mousetraps and compete with Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

Our federal administration is quite complacent about these activities, and it is indeed hard to see why shareowners of companies with lethargic or inefficient managements should be deprived of the capital gains takeovers might bring them. On the other hand, the wholesale replacement of equity by debt makes companies individually more vulnerable to adverse business developments and the economy collectively more vulnerable to deflationary or recessionary shocks. Monetary policy may be crippled as a result. If the government is going to take responsibility for assuring the survival of nonfinancial companies—individually, like Chrysler and Lockheed, or collectively—then perhaps it should limit their permissible debt/equity ratios, just as it does for financial institutions. As a minimum, of course, the government should make the tax liability of companies neutral with respect to their debt/equity structures.

A disquieting implication of the large premiums in takeover values is to confirm failure of ordinary market prices to reflect long-run fundamental values. The long-standing suspicion of this failure was expressed eloquently by Keynes when he likened the stock market to a beauty contest in which the contestants' prizes depend on voting the same as other contestants. The quest for short-run profits, "day trading," stresses the ability to gauge the immediate impact of news events on other speculators rather than their long-range effects on earnings. In the last ten years, the excess volatility of stock market prices relative to dividends and earnings has been ingeniously documented econometrically by Robert Shiller.[4] Despite their best efforts, the finance intelligentsia who espouse efficient-markets theory have not been able to refute Shiller.

Errors in market valuations have further negative repercussions. Managers of corporations may be shortsighted in their outlooks and investment decisions, believing they get points and bonuses for the performance of their companies' stocks in a quarter, a year, or four years. If the stock market gave them reliable signals of fundamental values, short-horizon managers would be making good decisions. But if the stock market signals are speculative noise, the managers are making bad decisions. Whether the newly structured high-debt firm, in which managers have considerable stakes in highly leveraged shares and stand both to lose much more and to gain much more than under the old structures, will be more efficient remains to be seen. The unrelenting pressure of debt service may force managers to be more efficient, but it might also force resort to short-term expedients to maintain cash flow at the expense of longer run values.

One way to encourage fundamental investing and to discourage short-horizon speculation is to tax financial transactions. Keynes tentatively suggested this tax, and I favor it today. With international agreement a transfer tax could also, in my opinion, diminish speculation in foreign-exchange markets and allow larger differences among currencies in short-term interest rates, permitting somewhat greater autonomy in national monetary policies.

I think developing and ex-communist countries should go slow in copying the financial institutions and markets of the United States and the United Kingdom, or of Japan for that matter. When I read that Wall Streeters are visiting Beijing to help the People's Republic establish a stock market, I shudder. It is far from clear that the proliferation of financial instruments, markets, arbitrage opportunities, and paper transactions in advanced countries has created social product to justify the high-quality human capital resources it devours. Business schools are beginning to

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wonder if they shouldn't be teaching students how to make products and manage workers rather than how to shuffle paper. David Halberstam's *The Reckoning* tells how the famous financial Whiz Kids of the Ford Motor Co., many years ago, lost the ball game for Ford.

The major purpose of financial markets and institutions is to channel the excess savings of some agents in the economy to the excess real investments other agents are prepared to undertake. There are many ways to organize such flows, and they do not all require speculative markets.

Nor should these countries be in a great hurry to free capital movements into and out of their currencies of all controls and central-bank supervision. Remember that much of the rapid growth of European countries and Japan after World War II occurred before the full dismantling of exchange and capital controls. It is important even for small countries to maintain some degree of autonomy in monetary policy, so that local interest rates are not wholly determined by foreign markets. The foreign-exchange-transactions tax is one way to do that. Third World countries seeking developmental investments from overseas companies should avoid competitive scrambles with each other. Such competition can easily transfer the lion's share of the gains from the investments to the multinational companies, at the expense of the countries themselves. In the United States, states and cities are engaged in unsavory bidding for locations of new business installations, and the result is mutually destructive of their tax bases and other reasonable regulations.

Where the Invisible Hand Needs a Hand

Intensified confidence in the Invisible Hand—among economists, politicians, and the general public—comes at a time when more and more reasons for doubt are arising. It is not easy to discern how laissez-faire unaided, unguided, and uncontrolled can handle the big new challenges of the twenty-first century. Here are several examples.

1. At a time when long-range decisions are essential and myopia is especially dangerous, private markets evidently have great difficulty focusing on long horizons. If anything, they seem to be becoming shorter in their orientations. Business managers, especially in the United States, are criticized, even by themselves, for their preoccupation with quick payoffs. Financial markets are untrustworthy guides for managers because they are dominated by speculators. Much activity of financiers and managers is devoted to the thriving markets in whole businesses: takeovers, leveraged buyouts, mergers, break-ups of previous mergers. A disproportionate number of the brightest and most enterprising talent of our youth are devoted to the churning and shuffling of paper, in search of quick wealth rather than production of goods and services.

Speculative frenzy is not confined to the United States. Consider the fabulous booms in real estate values in Japan, beyond what could be justified by rents, and in related stock market prices as well. These booms generate prices that do not guide allocations of land to economically rational uses.

2. In the 1970s the world was jolted to a sudden realization that its economies were dependent on exhaustible sources of energy. When oil became plentiful again in the 1980s we seemed to forget the lesson. Energy prices reflect transient demand/supply conditions in disproportion to inevitable future scarcities. Perhaps because capital markets are shortsighted, investments to develop energy resources and to conserve energy use are abandoned or ignored when current prices are low, even though they would be justified by probable future prices. Commodity and capital markets together do not seem to have long enough horizons to give dependable signals. Nevertheless the thrust of energy policy in the United States these past eight years has been to rely wholly on private markets.

3. Economic theory has always recognized externalities as exceptions to Invisible Hand propositions. Externalities are nonmarket effects of economic activities on other economic activities. When agents receive no price signals to deter them from activities damaging to other agents or to encourage them to engage in activities useful to others, the market by itself fails to allocate resources optimally among

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activities. Generators of electricity in Ohio acidify lakes in the northeastern United States and in Canada. Neither the midwest utilities nor their customers consider the acid-rain costs their electricity is imposing on their northeastern neighbors when they decide how much to produce and consume or whether and how much to invest in antipollution technology. Likewise, the driver considering going on to a busy highway or city street thinks of his or her own convenience but not of the extra delays and inconveniences the additional congestion will cause others.

Belatedly, awkwardly, erratically, and often inefficiently, governments have been trying to deal with environmental damage, the health and safety of workers, customers, and neighbors, and other external effects. The affected industries chafe under the regulations and costs imposed upon them. Unfortunately the conservative fashion of deregulation has sometimes been blindly extended to these measures, along with the anticompetitive "toll-booth" interventions that deserve to be dismantled.

Ronald Coase did both Adam Smith and Dr. Pangloss one better by suggesting that the parties to negative externalities on the delivering and receiving sides could and would get together and contract with each other to eliminate or limit them if the social gains were worth the trouble.[5] In the case of positive externalities, similarly, the generators and beneficiaries would bargain to bring them to an optimal level. Thus would externalities be internalized. The Coase theorem seems to be a rationale *for* government rather than against it. It is precisely to handle situations where markets have difficulties reaching agreements and contracts of this kind that societies utilize governments.

Paradoxically, free market doctrines are more uncritically accepted just when externalities appear to be more serious than ever before. It's hard to maintain the pose of old welfare economics textbooks, that externalities are the exceptions that prove the Invisible Hand rule. Current problems are all the more complex because the adverse effects are cumulative but delayed, and because they are intrinsically difficult to evaluate. Many technologies that are efficient contributors to the welfare of individual consumers today spin off side-effects that will be costly or disastrous in the future: ozone depletion, greenhouse effects, toxic and radioactive wastes, receding water tables, and many other environmental and ecological dangers. As my acid rain example illustrates, these hazards do not respect international boundaries.

4. In the background of all our ecological problems is the excessive growth of the world population relative to the sustainable expansion of the planet's capacity to support human life, let alone to support it at standards of living to which all peoples aspire. No market miracle brings population and resources into balance and keeps them there. The only Invisible Hands are the cruel Malthusian checks. The hope of avoiding overpopulation is that fertility will spontaneously decline as standards of living rise. Over the past two centuries this mechanism worked successfully for the now advanced countries. For the poorest countries today the catch is that their rates of natural increase prevent the very progress in living standards that might diminish fertility. Modern medicine can keep people alive longer but it does not add space for them to live or resources to feed them. The rich countries of the world have obligations to help the poorer nations develop, yes even to help the workers of those lands to compete with their own high-paid workers. They are much less likely to offer assistance, markets for products, and privileges of immigration if it appears that the consequences are not to raise living standards but to foster still higher rates of population growth.

5. The Invisible Hand, as exaggerated and glorified in free-market ideology, has several unfortunate social externalities of its own. It is a rationale for unabashed and unmitigated individualistic selfishness. It assures those who seek, above all else, to accumulate material wealth that they are patriots doing Adam Smith's noble work, promotion of the wealth of nations. Indeed, nowadays there are numerous right-wing preachers, "televangelists," telling them they are doing God's work.

One message they get is that their obligations to others are just those specified in the literal language of previous contracts and written laws. All too frequently another one is that

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disobedience of those rules is worthwhile and even legitimate if the personal benefits exceed the costs. Many ordinary good people do not put quarters in parking meters if they calculate that the probabilities of being ticketed and fined $5.00 are less than one in twenty. That transgression of civic virtue may be innocuous. But if everyone behaves like that in all aspects of life, the social order breaks down. The burdens on police and courts are intolerable; law and litigation absorb the best minds of the society.

Competition is supposed to make self-interest work for the best. But competition itself cannot function without a clement political and legal framework, and competitive markets will not survive the efforts of competitors themselves to eliminate them without the unceasing vigilance of governments. And if governments, elected officials, and civil servants are constantly denounced as wasteful and worthless, as foreign bodies in a utopian organism of private markets, the central institutions and essential infrastructures of economy and society decay and wither away. Taxes are, according to Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, the price of civilization.

6. Finally, there are limits to the extremes of inequality that a democracy can tolerate, especially when television incessantly parades the luxurious life styles of the rich before poor youth who can never expect to taste them. Materialism, hardheartedness, and incivility are, according to many observers, byproducts of the Reagan revolution in the United States. President George Bush himself is calling for a kinder, gentler America. □

[1] The famous paragraph containing these words and summarizing the basic thesis of the book occurs in Book IV, Chapter II, on page 423 of the Modern Library Edition of Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), edited by Edwin Cannan and published in 1937.

[2] J. M. Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1936).

[3] Arhur M. Okun, *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1975).

[4] Robert Shiller, "Do stock prices move too much to be justified by subsequent changes in dividends?" *American Economic Review* 71 (October 1981): 421–36.

[5] Ronald Coase, "The problem of social cost," *Journal of Law and Economics* 3 (October 1960): 1–44. See also, R. D. Cooter, "The Coase Theorem," in J. Eatwell, M. Milgate and P. Newman, eds., *The New Palgrave, A Dictionary of Economics, Vol. 1* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 457–460.

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Nicolaus Mills

SOLIDARITY IN VIRGINIA

The Mine Workers Remake History

It was a warm fall Sunday afternoon. A day for watching football on television or going for a walk in the still-green Virginia countryside. The last thing the security guards at the Pittston Coal Company's Moss 3 preparation plant were expecting was the sight that greeted them: ninety-nine men in camouflage T-shirts and pants, wearing bright orange vests. "We are an unarmed group. . . . I repeat, we are unarmed. No person or property will be harmed," United Mine Workers (UMW) Regional Director Eddie Burke shouted through his bullhorn.

Burke's words were meant to prevent Pittston's Vance security guards from panicking. It was the sixth month of the UMW's strike against the Pittston Company, the leading coal producer in Virginia and the second largest exporter of coal in America. Tensions were running high. Since April there had been more than 3,700 arrests of UMW members and their supporters, and in June 44,000 miners in nine states had walked off their jobs in a series of wildcat sympathy strikes.

Without backup, the Vance guards, so easily recognizable in their blue jumpsuits, were in no mood for a fight. A UMW diversion had drawn most of the Virginia State troopers in the area away from Moss 3. Within minutes the fifth-floor control room of Moss 3 was in union hands. "Operation Flintstone," named in honor of the Auto Workers' Flint, Michigan, sit-down strike of 1936–37, had gone off without a hitch.

For two weeks prior to September 17th, the men who would occupy Moss 3 had met secretly in small groups. They had not been told the date of the sit-in or where it would occur. All they knew was that it was expected to last for days. Only on the Friday before the takeover were they told to stand by and wait for the code words, "Kiss the wife and kids." Then on Saturday calls went out for car caravans from three states to leave in staggered intervals for a Sunday rendezvous in Virginia just a few miles away from Moss 3. The ninety-nine invaders—94 striking miners, four UMW staffers, and a Methodist minister—had come prepared for the worst. There were "chuckers" with gas masks and heavy gloves in case Pittston decided to retaliate with tear gas. There were even men with ammonia bottles to ward off attack dogs. But as with the Vance guards, the precautions proved unnecessary.

As soon as Moss 3 was occupied, UMW supporters quickly gathered at the plant entrance. By nightfall there was a crowd of over 2,000 acting as a human shield for the men inside. During the next three days, Pittston representatives and state police were allowed into the plant to check that nothing was being damaged. Then on Wednesday evening after a federal judge issued an order for the takeover to end, the ninety-nine Moss 3 occupiers left quietly, slipping into the crowd—by now 5,000—still gathered at the plant entrance.

The September sit-in was not the first time the UMW and its supporters had surprised Pittston officials by using tactics borrowed from the labor movement of the 1930s and the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In April thirty-nine miner's wives calling themselves the Daughters of Mother Jones occupied Pittston's Lebanon, Virginia, headquarters with a sit-in that lasted two days. There, too, the occupation was nonviolent, and there, too, the

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emphasis was on an anonymous solidarity. Just as the miners occupying Moss 3 had dressed alike, so the wives occupying Pittston's headquarters refused to use their real names. To themselves and to the police, they were all Mother Jones. All that distinguished them was what number Mother Jones—one through 39—they took after beginning their occupation.

* * *

Notebook I: The countryside. On the way to Moss 3, I drive past a golf course and a handlettered sign that says, "Let scab cancer spread, and the union is dead." In the rolling Virginia hills, the near treeless golf course seems out of place. It has been two days since a tentative strike agreement was announced in Washington. The mood of the UMW pickets in front of Moss 3 is upbeat. Four years ago when I covered the UMW's Massey strike, everyone did picket duty from behind sandbagged bunkers. At the entrance to Moss 3, the men are staying in a wafer-board shack and keep warm with a wood-burning stove. What has not changed in four years are the camouflage shirts and pants. Every striker seems to be wearing them. The message they send is clear: for the UMW, this is a war of survival, not just a strike. There is a practical side to the camouflage as well. When the company or state police use camera surveillance, at a distance every striker looks alike.

* * *

Nobody sits-in in the lobby of Pittston's Virginia headquarters these days, and the block letter sign, "UMW FOREVER," that appeared on the side of Moss 3 when the mine workers retook the plant is also gone. But the consequences of the UMW's ten-month strike are visible where they matter most: in the agreement the company and the union hammered out in sixty-two days of negotiations presided over by former Secretary of Labor W.J. Usery, Jr.

If the UMW had accepted what in June 1989 Pittston called its "last best offer," it would have meant not only the loss of jobs but the end of health plans on which its members rely. What the UMW got in the contract its rank and file ratified by a 63 percent margin this February is, however, a package that not only provides needed health protection but a pay raise and safeguards preventing Pittston from turning its union mines into nonunion operations.

• *Health benefits*: Pittston will provide a lump-sum payment of $10 million into the UMW's 1950 benefit fund for miners who retired before 1976, and it will make the same contribution as other unionized companies into the UMW's multi-employer 1974 benefit fund, designed to protect beneficiaries whose companies have gone out of business. Health benefits will be paid at 100 percent. Every working miner and pensioner under age sixty-five will be sent a $500 benefit check every six months. If their medical expenses are under $500, they will, as a compensation bonus, be allowed to keep the balance of the $500.

• *Wages*: No givebacks. UMW members will receive a $1.20 raise per hour over the life of their new contract, which extends until 1994. Each year 40 cents will be added to their hourly pay. The first of the three payments begins in 1990. Top union scale goes to $17.52 per hour.

• *Job security*: Laid-off UMW members must be hired for the first four out of five job openings at Pittston's nonunion mines. If Pittston coal production is subcontracted to another operator, nineteen out of twenty job openings at that operation must go to laid-off UMW Pittston miners.

• *Employment*: No UMW member can be required to do production from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on Sunday. Pittston can introduce a seven-day work week, however, by putting miners on a twenty-eight-day rotating schedule. In turn mine workers will have access to a four-day, ten-hour schedule, which will provide them with fifty-two fewer working days per year.

• *Profit sharing*: During the first year of the contract, union and company officials will meet to see if such a plan can be agreed upon.

* * *

Notebook II: Hidden blessings. I drive to Camp Solidarity, where they are having a dinner honoring the ninety-nine men who occupied Moss 3. Before the strike began,

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Strikers in camouflage face state troopers in a nonviolent action. Photo by Joe Corcoran/UMW

nothing here had been in use for years. Now there is new building everywhere, even a bunk house for visitors. A group of wives has brought dessert—apple pies, chocolate cakes, brownies. I get a sense of what a quilting bee or a house raising must have felt like a century ago. Nobody here wanted this strike. But now there is a feeling of having been tested and passing with flying colors. Everyone curious about the details of the settlement, but what everyone talks about is the closeness the strike generated. The neighbor who was a familiar face, the man one saw only at union meetings now seem real flesh and blood. It is the distancing of day-to-day life that suddenly feels unnatural.

* * *

Pittston's decision to take on the UMW is consistent with the way it has been run since 1984, when Paul Douglas, son of the late Illinois Senator Paul H. Douglas, a longtime friend of labor, became its chairman and CEO. At Brink's and Burlington Air Express, the Greenwich-based Pittston's two other major companies, Douglas's first move was to go after union control and slash jobs. Once he succeeded in doing both, Pittston Coal became his next target, despite the fact that since 1984 union productivity has gone up 67 percent from 12 to 20 tons a day per miner. In 1986 Pittston set up Pyxis Resources Company, a nonunion corporation to which it began selling and subcontracting its union operations. The result has been layoffs for 4,000 UMW miners. In 1986 alone Pittston's union operations sold off 52 million tons of coal reserves while its nonunion operations added 44 million tons.

Pittston's belief that it could do to the UMW what it had done to the Teamsters at Brink's and Burlington was bolstered by the political atmosphere in which its union busting began. When Douglas took over Pittston, President Reagan's breaking of the 1981 air traffic controllers union was still a vivid memory, and when Pittston finally forced a strike on the UMW, there was every reason to believe it would have the support of the Bush administra-

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tion. As the new President would make clear by vetoing Congress's proposal for a bipartisan fact-finding committee to look into the machinists' strike against Eastern Airlines, his was not an administration about to do anything to settle a strike workers seemed to be losing.

Pittston's anti-union offensive began in 1987, when it announced it was withdrawing from the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA), with which the UMW bargains collectively and which accounts for 35 percent of the nation's coal production. Pittston's withdrawal from the BCOA allowed it to stop payments in early 1988 into a multi-employer health and pension fund begun in 1950 by John L. Lewis in an agreement allowing the BCOA to modernize (it would eventually cost the UMW 300,000 jobs). Pittston was still not through with its anti-union offensive, however. On February 1, 1988, it canceled health benefits to 1,500 disabled miners and retirees covered by a company insurance plan. When asked about the ethics of such a tactic, Pittston went out of its way to make clear it was playing hardball. "It's like a credit card. Theirs expired," Pittston spokesman William Byrne told reporters.

The reaction of UMW rank and file to Pittston's attacks was outrage, but not until April 1989, after all mediation attempts had failed, did the UMW officially go on strike. It was a move Pittston had been attempting to bring about for fourteen months, and when it came, the company was ready. With an enormous security budget (company expenses would reach $20 million before the strike was over) Pittston was prepared to start running coal with replacement workers. It was also counting on help from Virginia, a right-to-work state. In this latter expectation Pittston had not miscalculated. Governor Gerald Baliles, who after his defeat at the hands of Lt. Governor Douglas Wilder went to work for one of the law firms hired by Pittston, would spend $1 million a month to provide Pittston with state trooper protection. And the courts would act in similar fashion. Before the strike was over, the UMW would be subject to over $64 million in fines and post $5 million in appeal bonds. By contrast Pittston's negligence fines for a 1983 accident that cost seven miners their lives totaled $47,500.

* * *

Notebook III: The jackrock. It's made of two nails twisted together and welded at their center. When it lands, it does so like a child's jack, with at least one of its ends pointing up. In a strike that the UMW has kept as nonviolent as possible, jackrocks have, nonetheless, been used from time to time to puncture the tires of nonunion trucks hauling coal. Small and inconspicuous by comparison with the weaponry of the Virginia state troopers (shotguns) or Vance security, it's a modern David's stone for fighting Goliath. In guerrilla war as in labor war, I think the only military rule is that whichever side limits itself to small, cheap weapons wins. Anything more is overkill, a sign that you haven't persuaded anybody.

* * *

"We're clearly prepared to go on indefinitely," a confident Paul Douglas declared as the strike finished its fifth month. But on New Year's day, as Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole announced an agreement had been reached between Pittston and the UMW, it was a very different Douglas who met with reporters. The new agreement, which Wall Street coal analyst Joel Price of Donaldson, Lufkin & Genrette calls a "smashing defeat for Pittston," was one Douglas insisted the company "just couldn't be happier" with.

What changed Douglas, who if forced out at Pittston will, along with senior executives in his management team, share in a $4.1 million severance package? Part of the answer lies in Pittston's hubris. Going into the strike Pittston believed it could get as many as 40 percent of its workers to cross union lines. Then all it would take to keep production at near-normal levels were some replacement workers. But nothing like that followed. Not only did UMW workers stay out, the replacement workers Pittston brought in proved inept. By late fall Pittston production was one-third its normal rate, with its profits dropping, according to *Business Week,* by nearly $12 million for the first half of 1989.

At the same time, while Pittston was losing

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momentum, the UMW, after a series of early setbacks, was gaining it. The September sit-in at Moss 3 was the most dramatic sign of UMW resurgence, but there were other signs as well. The mayor of nearby St. Paul, himself a striking miner, had no trouble getting the town to let the UMW use its football field for a Labor Day rally. In November a write-in campaign by Jackie Stump, the President of UMW District 28, won him election to the Virginia House of Delegates in an upset victory over the father of an anti-union judge. Most important of all, a ten-acre parcel of land, rented to the union for $1, quickly turned into Camp Solidarity, a 24-hour-a-day gathering place that for UMW members and their families became a home away from home.

The result was that the UMW leadership could wage a war of attrition against Pittston without having to worry about internal problems. On the domestic front the UMW, nonetheless, moved quickly to make sure its own rank and file was not economically bled to death. With a strike fund of over $100 million, the union was able to pay strikers $225 weekly and by the year's end come through with a Christmas bonus of $1,000. From the Steelworkers, the Auto Workers, the United Food and Commercial Workers, the Building and Construction Trades Council, among others, came generous donations. At Christmas alone, the gifts earmarked for the Pittston miners came to $500,000—enough to provide $250 per family plus a special allowance for each child.

The final key to the UMW's victory was, however, the two-front war it waged in Asia and Europe. With 57 percent of its coal exports going to Japanese steel companies, Pittston was extremely vulnerable to any loss in production. When Pittston cut off health benefits to retirees, it struck a bad note to begin with in a country in which concern for the elderly is ingrained. UMW did not, however, let matters rest here. Before the summer was up, it got a commitment from John Maitland, general president of the Miners' Federation of Australia, that Australian coal, on which Japan also depends, would not be used to make up any Pittston shortfalls. Then in October UMW Secretary-Treasurer John Banovic traveled to Japan to meet with Japanese union officials and get their support as well. With China in no position to ship more coal to Japan because of its student uprisings and with South Africa as a producer from which Japan could not import more coal because of political reasons, Pittston was trapped. It could buy extra coking coal from rivals, but it had put itself in a very unstable position as a Japanese supplier.

The UMW's other foreign front was Europe, and here, even more than in Asia, history favored the union. The key ingredient was winning support from the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTU), which represents eighty-eight million workers in ninety-seven countries. The ICTU's usual focus is on labor disputes in countries like South Africa and Chile, but when in response to the UMW's request for support it sent a delegation to America that included a representative from Poland's Solidarity, the Bush administration found itself in a difficult position. Hoping to gain new influence in Eastern Europe, it had championed Solidarity. Now it found American labor policy under attack from an international delegation that included Solidarity.

After meeting with UMW officials on Wednesday, October 11, the ICTU delegation met with Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole on Thursday. By Friday the 13th Dole was in Virginia, checking on the Pittston strike first-hand. The result was a wholly different administration scenario than with Eastern Airlines. By the weekend, Dole had persuaded W.J. Usery to act as a "supermediator," and two months later, when Usery finally brought about a strike settlement, it was Dole herself, standing between UMW President Rich Trumka and Pittston's Paul Douglas, who made the announcement, promising a special commission would study the health and retirement problems facing the entire coal industry.

* * *

Notebook IV: Press clips. I have now read virtually everything written on the Pittston strike over the last year. Wonderful pieces in the Village Voice *by Denise Giardina, who grew up on a West Virginia coal camp, and in* In These Times *by David Moberg, the best*

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labor reporter I know of. But most everything else I read is white bread. In the 1980s being a labor reporter for a daily newspaper in New York or Washington seems to to be as outmoded as being a radio repairman. It can't just be the middleclassing of American journalism! Whatever the reason, the price is high. Missing from almost everything I read is a sense of what it means to be threatened with never working again, how you feel when men and women you've never met before bring you food, money, Christmas presents.

* * *

For the UMW, the Pittston strike has been more than a needed victory. It has also been a strike that, as the union begins its hundredth year, has brought about a new set of heroes. The most obvious are the ninety-nine men who took over Moss 3. But just as significant and as well known in the coalfields, are the men and women who showed how the current UMW, down to an estimated 70,000 working miners, remains as much a movement as a union.

One of the new heroes is Gail Gentry, the 2,000th person arrested after the strike began. Gentry lives in a house near Moss 3 that in every way seems like what the house of a man who has made a decent living in the mines should be. It's a comfortable place. In early January, when I visited him, there were Christmas stockings still hanging from the mantle. Next to them a complete set of *Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia* and next to the *Encyclopedia,* a gun rack filled with hunting rifles. What is different about the Gentry house is the long wooden ramp leading up to the front door. Gentry's legs are paralyzed as a result of a 1978 mining accident, and the platform allows him to come and go (he drives a specially outfitted car) without assistance. When Gentry, as one of the men most affected by Pittston's cutoff of health benefits, was arrested, it said much about his personal courage. But his arrest also sent a clear message to Pittston and to anyone watching events from Washington. This was not going to be a strike, the message said, in which one generation forgot another generation in order to cut a deal. Such bargaining might be fine within the corporate world but not in a union where history still mattered.

Unlike Gail Gentry, Edna Sauls has never worked in the mines. The wife of Doug Sauls, one of the miners who took over Moss 3, Sauls quickly became convinced, however, that the Pittston strike was a do-or-die battle for her family. As she put it, "My husband is forty-two years old. He's worked in the mines for twenty-four years. Who's going to hire him for another job?" Sauls was one of the thirty-nine Daughters of Mother Jones who occupied Pittston headquarters in April, but what has brought her to the forefront in the Pittston strike is her music. Her best known song, "Let Me In," is called the "Camo Song" by those who have heard it. The song was inspired by a child Sauls taught in Sunday school whom she found in tears one morning because his grandfather had been put in jail. The subject of "Let Me In" is a child whose striking father has been put in jail. The child asks to be jailed as well, and after each verse Sauls comes back to a chorus that her union audiences sing along with her, "Let me in/Let me in/ The man in camouflage is Dad." To Sauls, who never composed music before the strike, the attention she has gotten has been a surprise. What has not surprised her, however, is the music itself. Like Gail Gentry's arrest, it seems part of a world she shares, not part of a world she invented. "The words come faster than I can write them down," she says. □

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Ken Pomeranz

CHINA SINCE THE SQUARE

Political Repression, Economic Austerity

However admirable China's democracy movement may have been last June (1989), its goals should not be confused with what we call "democracy" in the West. The Beijing Goddess of Democracy may have looked like the Statue of Liberty, but the people who erected it also sang the "Internationale." No doubt, the people in Tiananmen Square wanted a more responsive and less corrupt government, and they favored greater civil liberties. But if you had asked about competitive elections, or a system in which the voices of peasants would count as much as those of intellectuals or bureaucrats, you would have found a lot less agreement. Many protesters saw their demands as a request that the Chinese Communist party live up to its own promises, and not that China remake itself in the image of the West. To some extent, it's now the government that's following a Western blueprint—that of monetarist economics.

If the influence of the cultural opening from the West may have been smaller than the Western press has suggested, the influence of the economic reforms has been enormous. There's no question that the switch from the strict command economy of the late 1960s and early 1970s to the mixed plan-and-market economy of the 1980s has enormously raised the living standards of a great many Chinese, especially in the countryside, and that this has whetted people's appetites for more change in the same direction. However, the shortcomings of the reform also contributed to the June crisis—and the economic problems may be the most serious ones facing China today. The greater inequality that resulted as some people gained much more from the reforms than others has led to resentments among all sorts of groups, from teachers to soldiers, who believe they've been left behind. And if we judge by income, both groups are right.

The reforms have left the central government broke and unable to do many things it used to do. Its tax administration is tiny—about six-hundred people—and, as less of the economy runs by central command, Beijing has found itself unable to take advantage of all the growth that occurs. Consequently, those projects that depend on central government revenue have not fared well—from the army to the national universities, to picking up the deficits of many of the large state-run factories and to the government bureaucracy itself.

Finally, the reforms massively increased corruption. First, they created new opportunities—both because there were more goodies around and because, whenever an economy runs partly by plan and partly by market, there are going to be opportunities for profit by those who can move goods from the planned sector, where prices are low and shortages frequent, to the private sector, where the same goods command a much higher price because of the shortages. Second, the reforms made it very hard even for bureaucrats who wanted to do their jobs honestly. These officials were still supposed to mobilize people for all sorts of tasks, from ditch-digging to forming a crowd for visiting dignitaries, but they no longer had the power over people's daily lives that they once did. It's natural for such local officials to rely on whatever powers they still have: for instance, the ability to give a peasant family a large or small quota of fertilizer at the state-set price (much lower than the market price). As

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even relatively honest officials resorted to such measures to get their jobs done, it became all but impossible to police those who were manipulating the gaps between plan and market for personal gain.

The combination of relatively low official salaries, which have gotten even lower in real terms since the reforms, with the regime's new stress that "to get rich is glorious" helped demoralize party cadres, who had previously taken pride in the notion that they were leading China into the future, even if they weren't particularly well-rewarded materially.

The upshot was a huge increase in corruption and in consequent disgust with the leadership. The demand that something be done about corruption was one of the most appealing points made by the protesters last spring. Behind the protesters stood thousands of people who made small, silent sacrifices, like the cafeteria workers who did unpaid overtime so that the demonstrators would be able to eat when they got back late from campus (they would come back after dark to avoid the secret police). Even hostile observers agree that during the Beijing Spring crime fell, workplace morale improved, and in general, people gave up on their usual form of resistance—namely, doing as little as they can get away with while not calling attention to themselves.

In the aftermath of June, people have returned to various sorts of passive resistance. Observers say that the mood at most Chinese workplaces (including many government offices—we should remember that many lower officials sympathized with the democracy movement) is best characterized as "sullen." Foreign managers in joint ventures have reported that very little work is being done; from what little we can tell, the mood in all-Chinese offices and factories is no better. The population seems to feel that it is back to a situation in which the only form of available resistance is "bad habits," which bodes ill for a regime that desperately needs increased production and revenue to meet its large internal and foreign debts.

Aside from knowing that people are punishing the regime by not working, what do we know now that we didn't last June? We know a bit more about what happened in the spring. For instance, protests seem to have been even more widespread than we thought—the U.S. government now says that actions took place in over a hundred cities. We also know more about what happened in Tiananmen itself. One point is that, despite the bravery of many students, and the media focus on the ones from Beijing University, it was other groups that took most of the casualties. After a while, it appears, student and workers in the square began to separate—not over political differences, but over life-style differences. Many workers offended the more ascetically-minded students by drinking. The workers occupied the northeast corner of the square, where most of the heaviest firing took place.

It appears that before the shooting started, many—though certainly not all—of the Beijing students had already left the square, after deciding that they'd made their point and that violence was likely to occur. A large proportion of the students who were still there seem to have been from the provinces. Many had only just arrived, having come hundreds of miles to join the movement; they were not about to leave so quickly. The government probably knew about these changes in the composition of the crowd, and since the Beijing students were much more likely than either workers or provincial students to have relatives in high places, the government's delay in using violence appears in a new, more cynical light.

In the continuing crackdown since June 4th, workers and unemployed youth have evidently been hit much harder than students and intellectuals (though they have obviously suffered, too).

The government has taken harsh steps to prevent a recurrence of coordinated opposition by intellectuals. High-ranking sympathizers of the Democracy Movement, particularly in the Ministries of Culture and Information, have been purged. The entering class at Beijing University has been cut by 60 percent, and all incoming freshmen now have to take a year of military training, which will surely be laced with heavy indoctrination. And, of course, intellectual opposition has also been weakened by the loss of prominent people who were arrested or forced to flee. Of late, the regime

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has even felt able to ease up a bit on intellectuals.

The Western press has been less diligent about reporting the economic dimensions of the crackdown. The government has been unable to get as large a share as it had hoped of the recent growth in the Chinese economy, and one of its responses has been to turn to the printing press, creating serious inflation. As monetary forces push prices upward, even more serious structural reasons for inflation have appeared: continued shortages of key goods, the need for payoffs to officials by successful enterprises, and a tax structure that encouraged local governments to open their own factories for certain consumer goods—such as wristwatches—while pressuring local retailers (both state-owned and private) not to stock cheaper goods made in Shanghai, Tianjin, or wherever. By spring of 1989 inflation had hit 35 percent in many cities, and salaried workers who didn't have second incomes (honest or otherwise) were being left behind.

What the state has chosen to do about this is to try to kill three birds with one stone—and the stone is a classic Western-style austerity program such as the IMF and the banks prescribe for debtor countries. The state hopes to reduce its own indebtedness—or at least the problems it poses—by forcing workers and peasants to take some of their payment in forms other than cash. Peasants have been paid for a large portion of this year's harvest with IOUs that have no due date and that are impossible to trade—there are reports that this has led to violence against local officials in some rural areas. Workers in many urban factories—and, to a lesser extent, offices—are being given their bonuses (usually from 25 to 40 percent of annual pay) in long-term government bonds. Essentially, these people are being forced to help the state solve its debt crisis by doing their work for future payment, or maybe none at all.

The second problem the state hopes to address in this way is inflation. When people get large amounts of compensation in a form they can't spend, there's going to be a lot less upward pressure on prices. The government claims that these measures have brought inflation down to under 10 percent, or less than a third of what it was last spring; outsiders can't really tell. An austerity policy of this magnitude has potentially devastating social effects, which will complicate the third thing the government is trying to do: place the blame for both economic dislocation and the spring protests on groups outside the party.

This simple prescription is likely to have very nasty effects. There's the obvious fact that stabilizing prices by cutting the wages of working people is bound to cause real suffering and discontent. It is not at all clear that the most important causes of Chinese inflation are monetary. Shortages of goods are real, caused by bureaucratic hoarding and supply bottlenecks. For instance, desperate coal shortages plague much of China, but coal sits on the ground in Shaanxi province because one of the central government projects that didn't get funded during the boom, while revenue was being retained at local levels, was additional railroad-building. Just plain corruption is another cause of inflation. People might well see both their wages, and the general price level fall as the boom in construction materials and a few other goods ends; yet also see the price of cabbage and rice keep rising.

There's also a real possibility of a major crash in China's fledgling private sector, which could be a social catastrophe. Most of the small collective and individual businesses that have sprung up in the last decade live on credit, and in a major slowdown they're going to find that the burden of their loans will be heavy, with new loans perhaps impossible. These businesses have become very important employers in many big cities—they employ at least thirty million urban workers, or around 25 percent of the urban workforce, and in many cities the number of younger workers in these enterprises is over 50 percent. Moreover, the people in the private sector have no safety net at all. When you get a job with one of these firms, you opt out of all the guaranteed housing, health care, unemployment benefits, ration coupons, and so on reserved for workers in the state sector.

Consequently, the austerity policy is going to hit hardest at young urban workers, and at the hopes of unemployed urban youth, most of whom have no chance to get jobs in the state

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sector. This is a fairly volatile part of the population, and if the austerity program continues, it would not be surprising to see food riots next year, or a year later. It also seems likely that street crime will increase.

To some extent, all this may actually suit the regime's purposes. In recent months, it has tried to claim that students, except for a few "troublemakers," had little to do with the protests of last spring; it has blamed as much as possible on unemployed youth, poorly disciplined workers, and people in the private, informal sector of the economy. The government seems to be lumping all these people together as "dangerous classes," quite as nineteenth-century European regimes often conflated drifters, criminals, and the working poor. If some of these people either turn to criminal forms of self-help or to protests that can be portrayed as riots, while the cowed intellectuals stay out of things, the government will have won a propaganda victory.

The government has recently announced a campaign against corruption in the private sector. It has also said that preventing tax evasion by private firms is a major part of its plan for closing the deficit. As public policy, this is somewhat dubious: though tax evasion by individual and collective businesses is widespread, as a source of fiscal strain it's not in the same league with the losses run by many large state firms or with the way counties, municipalities, and provinces hide their revenues from the central government. But since the government can't figure out what to do about those things, it will try to look good with the claim that it's vigorously attacking corruption without further undermining the morale and public image of the party.

In targeting those outside the state sector and highlighting abuses there—which won't be hard to do—the government is isolating a segment of the people that will be alienated by the austerity drive anyway, and that many others have suspicions about already. This last point is important. Although most people in China seem generally to have supported the opening of the economy in the last ten years, many have strongly negative attitudes toward those most involved in the new economic organizations. And for good reasons. The nonstate sector has drawn a lot of people that ordinary Chinese have their doubts about—on the one hand, relatives of officials, using their connections to get coveted licenses, preferential access to materials, and so on; on the other, people who couldn't get jobs with benefits in the state sector, often because the state sector wasn't hiring much but sometimes because of a record of disciplinary problems in school or run-ins with the law. Thus, while the government squeezes everyone in an austerity program, it is likely to focus attention on the unpopular people in the private sector.

So where does all this leave us? For the time being, people seem to be swallowing the austerity program—not happily, but without effective organized resistance. In the long run, the government can't really afford to have workplace morale get worse and worse, but it seems pretty clear it doesn't intend to address that problem through democratization. Instead, it hopes that by placing the blame for problems on unpopular groups at home and on foreigners, it will rally some people, and that a return to price stability and visible arrests of cheaters will at least produce grudging assent. The severity of the austerity policy could undo that by producing serious social unrest among the already unemployed, the newly unemployed, and the much larger groups who will still have jobs or schools to go to, but who will see their standard of living fall; and this in turn could produce the pressures needed to sweep the hard-liners out of power. If, however, the government can convince the people who are only suffering wage cuts that they have nothing in common with those who are losing more, they may be able to get the former to see the protests as a sort of depoliticized crime—"rioting for fun and profit" as an American conservative once called it. In that case, the government may be able to hold off on any sort of reliberalization for a long time. □

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Thomas Byrne Edsall

BUSINESS IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Its Growing Power, Its Shifting Strategies

For the Democratic party, business has been a central political dilemma, ranking just behind race as the source of a policy conundrum pitting elite reformers against a working- and lower-middle-class electorate hungry for material improvement. It is corporate America that produces both pollution and jobs, that creates wealth and the maldistribution of wealth, that generates industrial carcinogens and equips shock-trauma units, that abandons central cities, and that writes the paychecks financing an enlarged middle class.

Through the glory years of the New Deal coalitions the Democratic party was able to hold the loyalty of those aspiring to climb the private-sector ladder while denouncing economic royalists and corporate profiteering. Democrats put in place the basic structure of a social welfare system, supporting at the same time a political climate that made possible the most technologically innovative industrial expansion of modern times.

During the last twenty-five years, tensions that once proved so beneficial to the Democratic party have been displaced by a complex set of forces tearing apart the formerly dominant majority coalition. Perhaps of first importance, the internationalization of economic competition has enabled American business to attack regulation and unionization, undercutting the wage demands of domestic workers.

Second, cultural upheavals of the 1960s—the civil rights, antiwar, environmental, and women's movements—produced a liberal elite within the Democratic party perceived by many working- and lower-middle-class voters as threatening to their neighborhoods, jobs, and values. The tie between liberal Democratic planners and the party's traditional core—blue-collar workers and white ethnic urban neighborhoods—was further severed by Great Society programs, which focused an unprecedented concentration of government resources on the black poor.

Third, the Democratic party throughout the same two decades supported progressive tax rates that, with inflation, suddenly began to place a heavy burden on the middle class: the marginal rates paid by a median-income family rose from 17 percent in 1965 to 24 percent by 1980.

Fourth, the emergence of the Democratic party in the 1960s as a leading proponent of civil rights legislation, as well as of the use of court-ordered busing, resulted in a massive exodus of whites to a Republican party that had become increasingly conservative on race. In both northern cities and the South, where the Democratic-supported Voting Rights Act of 1965 enfranchised millions of blacks, race proved to be a stronger force than class or partisan loyalty.

Fifth, internationally, the troubles of the Labour party in England and the failures of central planning in the communist and developing countries have seriously contributed to undermining the more modest regulatory and interventionist goals of American liberals.

In *Fluctuating Fortunes,** David Vogel, Professor of Business and Public Policy at the

* *Fluctuating Fortunes: The Political Power of Business in America,* by David Vogel. Basic Books.

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University of California, Berkeley, provides a detailed examination of one of the most dramatic recent shifts in the balance of political power: the collapse of the public interest–organized labor alliance that dominated much of the political agenda from the late 1960s through the early 1970s, and the ascendancy of business from its nadir in public opinion at the time of Watergate to a position of agenda-setting power in 1981 with the election of Ronald Reagan.

Of the three-year high point of the liberal alliance between 1969 and 1972, Vogel writes:

> Congress enacted the most progressive tax bill in the postwar period, reduced the oil-depletion allowance, . . . transferred the primary authority for the regulation of both pollution and occupational health and safety from the states to the federal government, . . . and banned the advertising of cigarettes from radio and television.

Six years later the pendulum had swung in the opposite direction. From 1978 through 1981:

> "Congress defeated labor law reform, voted against the establishment of a Consumer Protection Agency, . . . deregulated oil prices, delayed the imposition of automobile emission standards, . . . and enacted two tax bills, the first of which primarily benefitted the wealthy and a second which reduced corporate taxes to their lowest level since the Second World War.

Part of this shift was accomplished by a political and ideological mobilization of business. From 1971 to 1979, the number of corporations represented by registered lobbyists grew from 175 to 650. General Motors increased its Washington staff from three to twenty-eight. The National Association of Manufacturers moved to Washington in 1973, and chief executive officers of Fortune 500 companies formed the Business Roundtable in 1972. Membership in the Chamber of Commerce more than doubled, from 36,000 in 1967 to 80,000 in 1974. Faced with such broad regulatory initiatives as proposals to create a Consumer Protection Agency and to reform labor law legislation, corporate interests in Washington abandoned marketplace competition to form coalitions encompassing manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, large and small businesses, unionized and nonunionized firms. The scope of these coalitions, in turn, provided business strategists with the ability to bombard Congress with corporate-generated "grass-roots" mobilization of employees across the nation. The number of business-related political action committees (PACs) grew from eighty-nine in 1974 to 1,204 by 1980; during the same period, their contribution levels grew from $4.4 million to $19.2 million.

This mobilization was backed by a corporate drive to alter public opinion, both among the broad citizenry and within intellectual and political elites. Vogel provides page after page describing business efforts to shape public opinion: growing corporate grants to the Public Broadcasting System, from $3.3 million in 1973 to $22.6 million in 1979; the key role of corporate-funded foundations in the financing of Jude Wanniski's *The Way the World Works* and George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty;* grants to the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute; the endowment between 1974 and 1978 of forty "free enterprise" chairs primarily at liberal undergraduate colleges.

The redirection of corporate resources toward the persuasion of elites coincided with two key developments. The tax revolt of the late 1970s created a de facto alliance between business and a large segment of the public for cuts in both spending and tax rates. Along parallel lines, public recognition of deteriorating American corporate dominance in the international marketplace prompted increased sympathy with business complaints that regulation, high union wages, and excessive tax burdens were helping German, Japanese, Korean, and Third World competition. From 1975 to 1977, the foreign share of the U.S. steel market grew from 13.5 percent to 17.8 percent. From 1970 to 1979, the share of the U.S. market controlled by foreign car producers nearly tripled, from 8 percent to 22 percent. Layoffs in Detroit, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Birmingham—all heavily unionized and with strong historical ties to the Democratic party—were endemic.

In the election of 1980 all these forces

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coalesced—as close as this country has come to a realigning election since the 1930s. A substantial segment of the business community now joined forces with the Republican party and the conservative movement to produce not only Reagan's victory but firm Republican control of the Senate for the first time in twenty-five years, as well as a net gain of 34 Republican House seats—enough to reestablish a governing conservative coalition.

Most striking during the late 1970s and early 1980s was how a large segment of the normally cautious business community became openly partisan. Alert to the vulnerability of the Democratic party in the elections of 1978 and 1980, a significant number of corporate PACs abandoned their policy of supporting Democratic incumbents and funneled cash to Republican challengers. These tactics paid off: with the 1981 congressional passage of the Gramm-Latta budget cuts—the first substantial retrenchment of domestic spending in fifty years—and the 1981 $750 billion tax cut, a measure skewed heavily in favor of corporations and the affluent. Nor did the newfound partisanship of corporate America produce a hostile reaction from Democrats: instead, House Democrats initiated a bidding war with the Reagan administration for the loyalty of business during the tax-cut fight.

Most of Vogel's book is devoted to documenting the shifting political influence of business, and in this respect it is unequalled for scope and supportive evidence. At a more theoretical level, Vogel argues that the political leverage of American business correlates directly with the condition of the economy. "The relative influence of business—particularly vis-à-vis public interest groups—declined as a result of the strong performance of the American economy from the early 1960s through 1973." Watergate prevented a business resurgence during the recession of 1974, but by 1978, with the continued energy crisis and the emergence of stagflation, "business regained the political initiative. . . . The continued stagnation of the economy also gave credibility to the complaints of business about the cost of regulation. Significantly, the high point of business's political influence during the last two decades coincided with the most severe postwar recession [in 1981–82]."

In general terms, this argument, I believe, is correct. The corporate effort to regain control over the political and intellectual debate proved highly successful during the period of energy crisis and economic stagnation between 1974 and 1980, particularly when business made the case that high interest rates, accelerating inflation, and the problems of economic competition were caused by liberal Democratic government policies. However, once economic stagnation turned into a serious recession in late 1981 and the unemployment rate broke the 10 percent barrier in September 1982, it was a severe blow not just to the corporate community but to the conservative Republicans.

The recession was widely viewed as a refutation of Reaganomics: public and political anger was vented most directly at the corporate tax breaks business had won at the start of the Reagan administration. In spring and summer of 1982, when the unemployment rate reached 9 percent, the Senate Finance Committee took a minor tax bill passed by the House and turned it into legislation pointedly retracting the most lucrative corporate tax breaks enacted in 1981, including the accelerated depreciation schedules that were to go into effect in 1985 and 1986 and the provisions allowing businesses to buy and sell investment tax credits. The bill, which a reluctant President Reagan signed into law in September (the first month that unemployment exceeded 10 percent), raised taxes by a total of $214.1 billion over five years, of which $103.3 billion was in business taxes. The 1982 tax fight set the stage for the 1986 tax reform bill, which transferred $120 billion in federal taxes from individuals to corporations over five years.

The 1981–82 recession had much broader political consequences: it obstructed the opportunity for further development of political realignment. The steady, post-Watergate Republican gains in the House, as the GOP went from 144 seats in 1975 to 190 seats in 1981, were now reversed, with the Democrats winning 26 new seats in 1982 and breaking the conservative coalition that had momentarily gained

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control of the House. Despite restored popularity as the economy rebounded in 1983, Reagan never regained full control of the legislative or ideological agenda.

For business, the Republican reversals of 1982 resulted in a major shift of political strategy: the abandonment of partisanship in favor of cementing ties to incumbent—and therefore largely Democratic—members of Congress. Access to power became more important than efforts to recast the structure of power. This pattern is evident in the steady shift from 1982 to 1988 among corporate and largely business-oriented trade association PACs in House races. In 1982 these groups were decidedly pro-Republican, giving $22.1 million to GOP candidates and $14.5 to Democrats. Six years later the amount going to Republican candidates increased modestly to $28 million, and the cash flow from business and trade association PACs to Democrats more than doubled, to $33.5 million. The corporate community has become a major force among the special interests providing critical backing to maintain a Democratic majority in the House. When organized labor and other groups' PACs are added to the equation, House Democratic candidates in 1988 got $68.3 million from PACs, nearly twice the $35.6 million received by the Republicans. The importance of this disparity cannot be overestimated: House Democratic incumbents, who have far more difficulty raising money from individuals and for their party committees than Republicans, depend on PACs for more than half their campaign funds, 51.5 percent, while GOP incumbents depend on PACs for 39.7 percent.

In many respects, the downplaying by business of a Republican insurgency in favor of an alliance with those in control of Congress is a rational course of action. Two principal adversaries—organized labor and the liberal-left intelligentsia—are in retreat. While the work force has steadily grown, the membership of AFL-CIO unions has dropped from 14.1 million in 1975 to 11.3 million in 1985, and their political and economic muscle continues to atrophy. Liberal economists remain out of the power loop, increasingly relegated to campuses, where their views are under attack not only by conservative colleagues but by a substantial body of conservative students.

The political status of business has been buttressed by two developments tied to the issue of race relations. The past seven years have been one of the longest periods of sustained economic growth in American history. As the ranks of those who remember the Depression have thinned, it has become increasingly possible for members of the nation's white middle class to segregate themselves conceptually and physically—by race, class, and residence—from those who suffer most from, and are abandoned most quickly by, the market.

At the same time, the middle class and the affluent have found ways to provide for many of their own wants through mechanisms that skirt an expanded federal government—which helps to reinforce business opposition to increased federal spending. Instead of supporting enlarged federal government services—some of which would inevitably be directed at lower-income groups, often disproportionately black—suburban residents have turned to local governments, targeting their tax dollars in their own communities for better schools, recreational facilities, and public maintenance. In highly conservative, overwhelmingly white and Republican Gwinnett County, Georgia—the fastest-growing metropolitan county in the nation—voters have repeatedly backed bond issues and other public expenditures to finance a massive expansion of services from tennis courts to state-of-the-art high school labs. Within the major cities, there is a growing trend by the middle and upper-middle class to, in effect, privatize public services—hiring private security firms, sending children to private schools, and organizing commercial cars to sidestep public transit, all of which militates against federal services.

Vogel concludes with the suggestion that American business leaders may regret their success in the political arena as they come to recognize that they too can become victims of the market.

The resurgence of corporate political power during the second half of the 1970s was paralleled

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by increased competition in previously regulated sectors of the economy. The defeat of [labor-backed] common situs picketing in 1977 coincided with a tripling of America's merchandise balance-of-trade deficit, and 1981 witnessed not only an unprecedented reduction in corporate taxes but the beginning of a wave of hostile takeovers that have threatened the power of almost every CEO.

Vogel's point, though well taken, underestimates other possible consequences of corporate political success. Not only have both the Reagan and Bush administrations provided business with incentives to promote advanced technology through antitrust protection, tax breaks, and research subsidies, but there are strong forces in the electorate and within each political party pointing toward a significantly expanded and often involuntary role for business. This was presaged, in part, by the 1986 tax reform bill raising the corporate share of federal tax revenues to an estimated 10.9 percent, a share that had dropped from 15 percent in the 1970s to just under 8 percent by the mid-1980s. Renewed public faith in the ability of the private sector to provide the wherewithal for basic social needs suggests that ever-greater burdens—often state-prompted and regulated—may settle on the shoulders of private industry.

Corporations are already entwined in one major area of probable legislative initiative: the expansion of entitlements and services sought by the middle class, such as day care, parental leave, pollution and toxic waste controls, and broad medical coverage. The cost of such initiatives may fall directly on the corporate sector or may be government financed through tax credits or other mechanisms—but given the currently disputed effectiveness of the federal government as provider of social services, Republicans and Democrats may well focus increasingly on business as the vehicle for delivery.

In the aftermath of the Reagan years, some ideologically committed Republicans and conservatives believe that the political right must begin to address those failures of the market that most seriously threaten the political consensus: distributional inequalities potentially disrupting partisan alignments at one end and social order at the other; the expansion of the underclass; the virtually unchanged poverty rate during the years of the recovery—just under 14 percent, with 32.5 million people falling below the poverty line in 1987; and the economic bifurcation of the black community, as substantial black middle-class gains have been shadowed by worsening conditions for lower-class blacks. The Democratic party and its thinkers remain under strong constituent pressure to address these problems but are increasingly constrained by the budget deficit, majority public opinion, and a recent history of flawed outcomes.

Despite the ideological divergence of the two parties, there is clearly an underlying basis for a degree of policy convergence, no matter how reluctant, between left and right. There is, for example, an increasing willingness among both Democrats and Republicans in Congress to use the tax system to channel child care benefits to working parents and to expand the earned-income tax credit to lift the incomes of the working poor. Liberal academics studying the underclass and the problems of central cities are finding that their most attentive audiences include major segments of the corporate community dependent on cities to produce competent work forces.

One characteristic of urban poverty is that legitimate marketplace forces are absent to a much greater degree than in more affluent areas. The central argument in William Julius Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged* is that corporations have abandoned older, heavily black cities, thereby closing traditional avenues into the working and middle class. There is a wide policy divergence between Wilson's call for a major manpower program, including expanded public-sector employment and private-sector training, and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp's proposals to establish urban enterprise zones and tenant ownership of public housing—but there is convergence on the goal of channeling employment opportunity into the ghetto.

Still, strong pressures restrict the likelihood of a substantial converging effort to address poverty and the underclass—pressures that go

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beyond the difficulties of negotiating strategies that seek to redefine the role of markets and government. The most important of these pressures will be an aging baby boom generation, the leading edge of which is now entering its mid-forties. These voters are reaching the age where they are seeking a wide range of improved and expensive benefits, ranging from better pension plans to protections for older employees to enlarged corporate college-tuition, dental, health, and long-term nursing care plans. Such demands will dramatically restrict the energy and resources available for attacking the problems of poverty.

These pressures are likely to confine the scope of expanded education and welfare benefits to those already employed—a population with far more political and economic leverage than the underclass. To the extent that worker pressure and government mandate will give rise to increasing corporate involvement in various social services, such services are likely to be restricted to those already under the corporate umbrella, rather than targeting those on the outside seeking to take the first step in.

Finally, political pressure on the Republican party to demonstrate that conservative economics can address distributional and social-justice issues will be counterbalanced by pressures from the opposite direction. For the past twenty-five years, the problems of poverty, particularly of black poverty, and the attendant pathologies of crime, welfare dependency, school absenteeism, and illegitimacy have increasingly become liabilities for the Democrats. The Republican party had benefited enormously from these liabilities, and in a systemic sense the GOP has a stronger interest in maintaining the underclass as an example of Democratic policy failure than in pioneering market-based solutions.

A deficit-driven competition for resources between the baby boom generation and the already well-organized elderly—together with the self-interest calculations of Republican party strategists—may result in continued neglect of the nation's most serious social ills. Insofar as domestic social problems are addressed, however, it seems likely that, at least for the short term, the business sector will play a privileged, if not decisive, role. It will require a substantial change in tactics by conservatives and liberals, and the shift is likely to be far more difficult for the left. In spite of labor union success in creating the corporate-based sector of the American welfare state (health insurance, retirement plans, paid vacations), the American left has traditionally been committed to a substantially adversarial relation to big business; in a contest for corporate resources it would find itself in a grueling struggle with the right, which for generations has worked with, represented, and been financed by the power elite of America's private industry. □

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On the Canon

The following responses are to David Bromwich's article "Notes on the Future of the Humanities," which appeared in the Fall 1989 Dissent.

Cynthia Fuchs Epstein

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE HUMANITIES?

It is argued that normal science grows incrementally, each development building on that which came before. Indeed, we would have no science without attention to the accumulated wisdom of our predecessors (leaps of imagination notwithstanding) leading to paradigmatic changes. No one wants to have to reinvent the wheel, the engine or the computer.

The humanities do not "grow" in the same way. The "classics" have fueled our imagination, but they have probably also led us astray. Freud, after all, led generations of psychoanalysts into using Greek myth as model and metaphor for human development and experience, and though many people still subscribe to the idea that "Oedipal" attachments govern children's development, there is considerable evidence that not all societies (or people) are affected by the process. Literal reading of the Bible has pitted "creationists" against "evolutionists" with serious consequences for the teaching of science in some states. The pristine classics often serve with authority gospel that is hard to dislodge.

Thus all knowledge provides a basis for both the improvement and the impoverishment of life. But, I would argue, cautiously, that, at least in Western society, there has been "progress" toward greater humanity and that reason does develop from reflection on the classics and the debates of the past about the good society, justice, and rights of individuals. After all, the forms of social life that we in the West enjoy are based on the ideas people have had about the "right way" to live.

And now we are challenged to weigh and accept new ideas about human nature and society that some think should be made part of the great debates. Some of the ideas seem stupid and silly and others are surely as sagacious as those of Locke, Hume, Mill, Rousseau, and others who probably were regarded by some as upstarts in their time. Although much of what the great philosophers had to say has clearly become part of the tradition of Western society and ought to be studied, some of what *they* said was silly and wrong and deserves proper comment and correction, much of which comes from comparative analysis and the viewpoints of those outside of the elites.

When one considers, for example, issues bearing on race and sex, the founding philosophical fathers in their reflections on "human nature" were particularly foolish. Those who would have us turn our backs on the black experience or feminist thought are content to leave a large gap in what Western civilization has to offer in the way of enlightenment, a comparative perspective, and the respect for fact over illusion. There were very few responsible classics on the issues of race and sex, and though such works (by Mary Wollstonecraft, for example) exist, they are not represented in the contemporary civilization textbooks that guide the syllabi of many college courses. Of course we rely on the guidance of professors to note that while Rousseau raised new perspectives on education while focusing on Emile, the education of Sophie would plunge girls into the kinds of derivative lives that Simone de Beauvoir objected to. How many years must pass, therefore, before *The Second Sex* might be declared a classic? We might want to read Kepler, but surely we wish to include the more

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modern Newton. How much time must pass before a work of thought becomes part of the canon?

I appreciate David Bromwich's concern about the substitution of rock-rap for literature or the context-less perspective in which deconstruction of texts is to be the sole approach to analysis, and the revelations of the French structuralists are regarded as the most convincing canon. Only recently I was appalled to read an article by a major historian whose scholarship on women workers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is well respected, but who has become a "postmodernist," in which she claimed to be enlightened by the view of Derrida that women might be regarded as "other" to men. Either de Beauvoir or Wollstonecraft would have informed her of a lack of originality on the part of Derrida (although the point is well made again).

Indeed, in feminist scholarship today (as in other "hot" fields technically proficient but literature poor) scholars often seem unaware of work done in their fields of interest even fifteen years before, much less those written fifty or one-hundred-fifty years before. A few works have been republished, such as that of Charlotte Perkins Gillman in economics, but the focus on the here and now is a form of academic "glitz." The central question remains: Which works should be assigned so that our students will emerge from the university with common points of reference?

I think we need to have it both ways. No year can be chosen as the cutoff point for the classics. In every age there are and will be new competitors for the places in the curriculum. We cannot wave them away. If we disregard all "feminist" or "Third World" or black studies works (quite a broad range of work to wave away), this generation of students and young professors may in their turn do violence to the classics of the past. But commit ourselves to some reasonable and tolerant pruning and open the courses to present varied views on the same subjects and the dialogue continues.

The finest old wines are periodically opened; a little new wine is poured into the bottle to top it off and replace what has evaporated, and a new cork inserted. Without this procedure, even the best wines go bad. The classics, the traditions, need periodic topping off too.

Todd Gitlin

TOWARD A LOOSE CANON

Just because I am in sympathy with much of David Bromwich's argument, I wish to add and argue a bit.

What should it mean to "teach great books"? To make them available; to make a case for what is worthy in them and what is not, and why; to tease out their logics, underscore their beauties, interpret them—but most of all, *to make them available*.

After all the smoke of debate has cleared, it may be that the important thing is to make the books available and not to drive students away from them. (One suspects that many who get fired up about "the canon"—as if it were cast in bronze—think it has to be *drilled* into the dullards.) Perhaps it is little more than the hubris of academics to think that the framework for teaching is all-important. Three decades after being "taught" *The Republic* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, I have forgotten the trappings in which the professor wrapped the books when he "taught" them. But because I have read the books, there is a continuing, ever-renewable cultural conversation open to me about human situations, societies, and natures. The important thing is to read books that display the powers of language and also exercise cultural power (whether deservedly or not is a legitimate question that ought to be addressed, too). Plato's questions, and Dostoyevsky's, are at work in the world. Like it or not, "the tradition" has shaped how we think of ourselves, our reason, our vision, our feelings, our prospects. The motto of humanists ought to be (to paraphrase Trotsky), You may not be interested in great books, but great books are interested in you.

Which books, then? An entirely legitimate question. There is good reason to open the canon to the world—to women, nonwhites, non-Americans. And Western civilization does not crumble if works from the non-West are moved into the curriculum.

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American parochialism could do with plenty of challenge. As for which gardens to cultivate, more than a few flowers should (no pun intended) bloom. If Professor A chooses to teach *Moby Dick* alongside Frederick Douglass's *Autobiography,* fine. If Professor B wants to teach *Moby Dick* alongside *Capital,* fine. If Professor C wants to teach *Moby Dick* alongside "Mario and the Magician," fine. If Professor D wants to teach *Moby Dick* alongside *King Lear* and C.L.R. James, fine. If Professor E wants to teach *Moby Dick* alongside one of Hawthorne's "damned mob of scribbling women," fine. At least teach *Moby Dick.*

Bromwich is right: a tradition has to be known before it is renewed. It is also true that life and the syllabus are short, and for every book added, something must be subtracted. When it becomes necessary for professors to dissolve the bands that have connected them with the Western Civ curriculum, a decent respect for the opinions of the humanities requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to revision. Authority has to give an account of itself; so does revision. Both traditionalists and modifiers have to give. Notice that William James, in the quotation with which Bromwich closes, wants us to "see how diverse the types of excellence may be."

I am for amending the taught tradition, then, to take account of excluded (not necessarily mediocre) voices, but against dissolving the common tradition altogether. For there is another general calamity that needs to be taken seriously by all the humanities. Students read little outside (and sometimes inside) the classroom. Ask a hundred students which movies they have seen recently and you learn of six or eight that more than half have seen in common. Ask the same hundred to name a book they have recently read, outside class, and you read a couple of Stephen King titles and a list of ninety-four different others. Common reading has gone by the boards. Unforced reading—for pleasure, reflection, communion in solitude—has lapsed into a quirky hobby, like windsurfing. The cultural conversation is thereby impoverished.

One reason for the collapse of common reading is, of course, television. Which means that it is urgent to teach *about* television. Not "teach television" in the sense that one "teaches" Shakespeare or Emerson. Television should not be "appreciated," it should be criticized—and detoxified. This cannot be done in the spirit of the Popular Culture Association, which takes consumability to be the criterion for worth. Nor can it be done in the spirit of those who indiscriminately find vast reserves of "resistance" in such cultural trophies as *The Beverly Hillbillies.* (In the wake of the sixties, "institutional radicals" in literary and media studies are especially drawn toward such notions: they allow one to have one's "subversion" and eat it. This is the flip side of the ethic of suspicion—the ethic of indiscriminate celebration of the popular.) Television should be analyzed across disciplinary lines, as a social fact, asking all the questions Bromwich raises. I don't much care in what department these questions are asked, but they need to be asked.

With battle lines drawn by the Bennett-Bloom right, what is loosely speaking the academic left has at times been drawn into a defense of the shopping-center university. What this amounts to, essentially, is the less-than-noble proposition, *laissez nous faire.* But we of the left, feminists, and people of color should thrive on renewable tradition. We dare not yield the republican ideal of a common discourse in the name of diversity, just as we dare not yield diversity in the name of some totalist conception of the Enlightenment. It is we, not Allan Bloom, who are the legitimate heirs of the Enlightenment ideals of equality and human rights. We ought to lay claim to our inheritance.

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David Bromwich Replies

I do not take the main issue to be "the canon." The word itself is misleading as well as solemn, and I used article was something different: the relation of individual thought to the reading of good books. I still find a useful test of that relation in the opinions of qualified judges both living and dead. If it is argued that some of the judges were bigoted, I ask whether we can get the benefit of their judgments without falling prey to their bigotry. The answer often given is a very hasty, ill-informed, and self-satisfied "No." This rigid proscription against judgment, or taste, has its corollary in the wish for a whole-length remodeling of our image of authors and readers. We are urged to praise books in keeping with their promotion of certain social aims, and to admire authors for the obviousness with which they participate in a certain group. To the extent that we cooperate, our reading will come to be guided by the demands of our own membership in a group. Thus the choices of criticism are reduced to the knowledge that any author I can care for will be "my type of person." Pretty clearly, this way of thinking is anti-intellectual and anti-individual, but it is widespread in the academy now, and it suggests how far the fate of individual thought may indeed depend on the fate of liberal learning.

Cynthia Epstein reflects that "the classics," for all the fresh thinking they may prompt, "have probably also led us astray." I object here to the "us." A person who conceives of reading in relation to some corporate body, some *us*—contemporary improvers, consciousness raisers, male leaders, or whatever—has been led astray even before the reading began, and any conclusion that follows has interest only for the historian of received ideas. I defend a kind of reading that wants to lead just one person astray. The mixed good it brings to that person's life will be the "wayfaring virtue" Milton speaks of, in *Areopagitica,* as an inevitable result of the clash of truth with falsehood and of truth with truth. Doubtless, as Epstein goes on to observe, the "founding philosophical fathers" were parochial, by our modern lights, in their understanding of "human nature." But again, it all depends on which fathers you have in mind. Bolingbroke, Pope, and Voltaire come out sounding shallow today (with their stress on universal truths and a translatable core of response). But the conception feels rather different if one reads inquisitively in Hume and Burke and Joseph Butler (with their stress on species-loyalty and its affective implications). In this last sense of the words, human nature seems to me an idea one ought not to surrender too quickly—whatever the promptings from the communitarians in political theory, and from a host of Foucault-inspired believers in macroscholarship and micropolitics.

What proportion of new and old books should we assign to students? asks Todd Gitlin. He supports some reasonable blend of the two. So do I and so have many educators since the end of the eighteenth century. That still leaves uncertain how we justify the elements of a given curriculum. Within the humanities the following two criteria have some utility: (1) The assigned work in question should be something that students would not routinely find for themselves; and (2) The work should meet the teacher's highest standard of what is worth reading and worth talking about. Notice that both (1) and (2) refer to the quality of the work and not the interest of a possible approach to it. This is the initial judgment that must be made: those who cannot do so have not begun to know their own minds, and ought not to be in the business of instructing others. Notice also that neither criterion makes any reference to the age or the medium of the work. In a class on modernism in the visual arts, Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet* might well pass both tests. In a class on narratives of the frontier, "The Beverly Hillbillies" would be unlikely to pass either test. I agree with Gitlin that classes inculcating the basic skills of "critical detachment" from mass culture may now actually be necessary even in college. If so, the scholars best equipped to carry out teaching on that model remain in the social sciences.

The debate about the curriculum has become the accidental focus in which a good many tensions of American society are dramatized. For some time now, the universities have existed in a compensatory relationship to the political culture outside them. Absurdities are therefore countenanced in school that would scarcely have come to light except for the conviction that they somehow "balance" absurdities of an opposite sort in the society at large. As a basis for common discussion, this state of things is unhealthy enough. But it has also led to an expectation among many students and scholars of finding in the university itself the community of like-minded and like-behaving persons that one is denied elsewhere, because they are dispersed, or inarticulate, or persecuted, or simply because not many of them exist outside universities. An immediate effect of this anomaly has been a confusion, in the habits of study, between the mood of asking questions and the mood of soliciting

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grievances. A more remote effect has been the splintering up of teaching responsibilities by the various movements of advocacy teaching. To one degree or another these movements tend to be intolerant, but, it is sometimes said, the worst they could produce by acting together is an incoherent pluralism.

I can imagine a different outcome: a negotiated economy of rival intolerances, in which the active and energetic groups work in concert, and together shape the curriculum of higher education. The sciences, of course, would still go on as they have always done. And the professions would continue to induct students after graduation—an ever more cynical mass of young persons, surer than ever before that society, like the culture they have learned about in school, is nothing but a contest between victims and victors, with no such thing as a common object of admiration. This picture can be called far-fetched. It is—I hope that it is. We have grown used to regarding the academy as the freest part of a society remarkable for its freedom of speech and expression. But nothing in the nature of an academy makes it so. Read the anonymous attacks on the salons of the French academy of painting, in the aristocratic eighteenth century, and again in the republican nineteenth century. Or read the articles on Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn now at last emerging from Soviet academicians, which describe a recent milieu of proscription apart from the machinery of the state.

Academies, in fact, are well adapted to set limits to the freedom of expression or to fix a conformity of opinion. If academic life in this country becomes less free in the near future, one way it may happen is by a series of concessions to the sensitivities of the advocacy groups I mentioned above. Divided by sex, race, class, or geography, united only in their belief that all significant speech is political speech, these groups will have little to say to each other. But that is not what they seek in any case. Beneficiaries of institutional compassion, they will control the scene of education to assure that nothing wrong, or strange, or possibly injurious to the group-esteem of their members, gets said in the public forum of the classroom or the quad. The liberal ideal of tolerance, which drew no comparable limits around permissible speech, will have been exposed as part of the imperial ethic of "the West." The defeat of the latter entity will have been worth the sacrifice.

Even such small sects can add up to a large threat to uncoerced discussion at a university. For they naturally defend against one kind of knowledge—the kind that challenges the protective instinct of a group-identity. It was a fear of just this nurturing and sheltering and oppressive tendency in every parochial community that provoked the great Enlightenment appeals to cosmopolitanism more than two centuries ago (including some memorable passages of the *Federalist Papers*). Maybe because their idiom is so dated, those appeals have been less often attacked in the current climate than the parallel Enlightenment arguments for tolerance. But as moral and intellectual goods, cosmopolitanism and tolerance are closely connected. Both refuse to associate the prestige of learning with the brute facts of authority and force. Both set the thoughts of the individual on a par with the demands of the group. And both look on the breakup of group practices as an occasionally necessary side effect of the creation of individuals. What if it turns out that tolerance, the encouragement of free discussion, is itself a Western idea? Must we on that account agree to teach it merely as one more plausible notion among the many lively alternatives? □

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Neil McLaughlin

GUS HALL COLLIDES WITH REALITY

Looking through the American Communist party's (CP) paper, the *People's Daily World*, is like entering into the twilight zone—a place where reality is suspended. During a time when Stalinism has collapsed throughout Eastern Europe, the headlines of the paper have dealt almost exclusively with domestic social issues, superpower disarmament negotiations, and events in El Salvador and South Africa. The paper has all but ignored the issues that strike to the very core of the party's reason for existence. Even CP members have noticed this phenomenon. "You almost never headline developments in socialism on your front page," complained a reader in a recent letter to the editor.

A sense of denial has pervaded the CP's approach to the changes in Eastern Europe from the very beginning. "It's true that there was an element of coercion involved," a major official in the CP responded to my inquiry several months ago about the information on Stalin's crimes then coming out of the Soviet Union. This understatement, to put it charitably, suggests a deep confusion in the party cadre that helps explain its reluctance to deal seriously with the collapse of communism.

It has become conventional wisdom on the American democratic left that the CP has been opposed to *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Although this is broadly true, the CP's views are somewhat more strained. During the early days of *glasnost*, the CP was critical of the Gorbachev reforms. Gorbachev was not attacked directly; instead, the CP press kept criticizing Boris Yeltsin, the Soviet reformer. Party leader Gus Hall and the *People's Daily World* tended to counterpoise criticisms of Yeltsin with positive references to "Comrade" Yegor Ligachev, a Politburo member opposed to the new openness. Hall argued that Communists must reject "some of the extreme and sensational statements by individuals coming out of the Soviet Union."

As it became clear that Gorbachev would not be easily dislodged from power, and as changes in Eastern Europe accelerated, the CP has slowly come around to an acceptance of *glasnost*. In April 1988 its theoretical journal, *Political Affairs*, published a speech by Nikolai Bukharin, with an editorial box acknowledging that Bukharin had been executed on false evidence.

It is not difficult to understand why the CP leadership has shifted to public support of *glasnost*—even though Moscow's current positions contradict much of what the CP has been saying for fifty years. The prestige of the party leadership is still tied to its connection with the Soviet Union. And many of the party cadre are swept along in the epidemic. A public break with Gorbachev would cost too much. Consequently, the CP has adopted reform politics in a Stalinist manner; the "new thinking" in the party came about not as a result of a vibrant internal debate but by following a calculated lead.

Still, there are signs of crisis within the CP. This past July the party held an ideological conference in Chicago entitled "The Clash of Ideas in a Changing World." Gus Hall's preconference essay, "The World in Transition," addressed the end of the Reagan era and the cold war but largely ignored upheavals in China, Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union. His only discussion of *glasnost* was to caution against the "anti-socialist offensive" being undertaken by the *New York Times, Time,* and liberal politicians. Discussion pieces that *Political Affairs* published before the conference dealt with Puerto Rican independence, disarmament, women's equality, and electoral politics. All vital political issues, but none are as central to the crisis facing the CP as the changes in the communist world. Judging from these discussion pieces, the party is responding to *glasnost* by hoping it will go away.

Such avoidance makes a certain amount of sense. Isolated from the demands of political power and compromises, the CP membership is often more orthodox politically than the bureaucrats who actually had to run the Communist governments in Eastern Europe. When the Polish Communist party first cut a deal with Solidarity, the *People's Daily World* published a piece entitled "In Defense of Living Socialism," which argued that "Lech Walesa is no friend of working class people" and that American Communists should express their interna-

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tionalism by petitioning American politicians to cut all aid to the Polish union!

Nor is this kind of orthodoxy a marginal phenomenon. In the early days of *glasnost*, the intellectual Michael Parenti played the role of ideological "hit man" for orthodoxy, or "bad cop" to Gus Hall's "good cop." Although Parenti says he is not a member, he writes regularly for the party press, and his politics are indistinguishable from the most orthodox in the CP. Given Parenti's prominence, one must assume that his views reflect a significant current within the CP.

Parenti is always careful to state his support of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. That caveat out of the way, he wrote last year that we need not "accept every new development and every utterance in the USSR uncritically. . . . I find some of the Soviet critics to be so relentlessly negative, so willing to echo Western propaganda, so devoid of any recognition of the positive accomplishments of Soviet society, that I occasionally have cause to wonder: If this is *glasnost*, who needs anti-communism?"

Parenti criticizes Yegor Yakovlev, editor of the *Moscow News*. The "new thinking" of the *Moscow News* has gone *too far* by having, among other things, printed an adulatory article about Andrei Sakharov without bringing out his "right wing" politics; promoted "a return to private property, self-enrichment and the removal of state regulation"; and, worst of all, included at least two articles in each issue that "mention or dwell upon Stalin's crimes." Parenti takes the paper to task for a headline that refers to "the millions that Stalin destroyed." "What source of information allows you to conclude that Stalin's victims numbered in the millions? Are you relying on Western anti-Soviet writers for such numbers? What reliable research has been done on this in the Soviet Union or elsewhere?" Parenti asks Yakovlev. Parenti seems not to be familiar with Roy Medvedev's research on Stalinism in his book *Let History Judge*. Twenty years ago Medvedev was under surveillance by the Soviet government, but he has recently been elected to the Congress of People's Deputies, and his thoroughly documented indictment of Stalinism has been excerpted in the Soviet press.

The massive upheavals throughout Eastern Europe have silenced Parenti, but the party retains a Stalinist style. Up to now it has been able to combine public support for *glasnost* with efforts to allow the membership to express differences with the "new thinking." But this has its costs. Several months ago Gus Hall wrote that "I would not compare this period to the sharp effects of the Stalin revelations and the Hungarian events when the impact on the left and on our party was devastating." But in the same article in *Political Affairs* he asks "Why, in the past year or two, have more full-time cadre than in the past asked to be released [from their party jobs] so they can get jobs in the private sector?"

Instead of seeing mass desertions from the East European Communist parties as a defeat, Hall views new opportunities for recruitment. "It is now clear," he writes, that "there are now many millions of non-communists who want to participate fully in building socialism." In an editorial response to West German Chancellor Kohl's proposals to reunify Germany, the *People's Daily World* claim that this is an attempt to destroy socialism in East Germany by making a "bid to grab the considerable wealth of the world's tenth ranking economic power."

Gus Hall and the CP have been lying about Stalinism for decades now, so it will take some time for them to readjust to reality. Perhaps it is just as well that they have little to say about recent events in Eastern Europe. A party that distinguished itself by unswerving support for Stalinism, the Soviet invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan, and the crushing of Solidarity, could do worse than keep quiet for awhile. □

Fred Siegel

Is there a Fish in this Class?

Stanley Fish, the Duke University Arts and Sciences professor of English, chair of the Duke English Department, distinguished professor of law, and self-described "academic leftist," has just finished a dazzling performance. The overflow audience at Princeton has sat rapt as Fish, who made his reputation as a critic of Renaissance poetry and a theorist of "self-consuming artifacts," demonstrates the sheer absurdity of the law. Time and again he shows that what is clearly X in a legal text can, by dint of judicial interpretation, become not X.

Contemptuous of conservatives like Allan Bloom who search for certainties, Fish has, in the manner of a certain sort of law school radical, described how the law is unpredictable because it "is nothing but manipulation and power. Legal decisions," he concludes, "are but ad hoc rhetorical performances." But, here he hesitates for a moment. Obviously pleased with himself, Fish explains that while radicals anxious to expose the manipulation of power see this as an indictment, he doesn't. Fish, who once described himself as a longtime Republican, smiles. "I think it's terrific." The job of the

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law, he says, is simply to re-create its own authority by presenting masterful performances.

An earnest graduate student, mystified at having seen Fish demolish all certainty only to leave everything exactly as he found it, asks if Fish's "academic leftism" isn't at odds with "real world" leftism. The student tries to make it clear that he's hip enough to understand that the word "real" has to be surrounded by the inverted commas of incredulity. "Don't you want to raise the consciousness of the audience?" the student concludes plaintively. "No," thunders Fish, plainly pleased to see that a sucker has taken the bait. "I want them," says Fish, who has repeatedly demonstrated the disconnection between academic and "real world" politics, "to do what I tell them to do."

The audience is awed, uncertain what to make of Fish's perverse charm. Professor Fish has just won another round for pure rhetoric in the ancient yet ongoing war between philosophy and sophistry. Later I explain to the student that for Fish, as for other academics these days, there can be no appeal to common principles, no appeal to truth, since truth for Fish is simply "a successfully enacted rhetoric."

Confused, indignant, the student, who appears to realize he's been had by Fish, snaps back. "Do you mean the people of Eastern Europe have been just fighting for a different rhetoric? We may not always know what the truth is," he says, echoing Vaclav Havel, "but we needn't be entrapped in lies." "Listen, kid," a gruff older prof grunts at the student, "you got to understand that for this guy there is no real world; it's rhetoric all the way down."

As the lecture ends, I walk over to Fish and point out that his argument crumbles at the touch. Rhetoric, I suggest, has far less to do with how cases are decided with than which judges are sitting when. I point out that California law took a 180 degree turn to the right after the recent judicial elections there replaced liberals with conservatives. "Huh," he responds, clearly unperturbed. "Tell you the truth," he says, "I'm not much concerned with that sort of thing. I guess you might say I'm a maniacal localist." "What's that mean?" I ask. "Well," he says, "I want to be able to walk into any first-rate faculty anywhere and dominate it, shape it to my will. I'm fascinated by my own will. . . ."

And then he strides out, admirers in tow, a sophist turned academic Napoleon, who has conquered academia, or a part of it, by folding the outside world into the alphabet. □

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Paul Buhle

Remembering H.L. Mitchell

The *New York Times* missed Mitch's death on August 1, 1989 and so did nearly all the liberal and left publications that share the interracial ideals of the old Southern Tenant Farmers Union (STFU). He died, as he lived, on the intellectual margin, at his home base in Montgomery, Alabama. And yet, no socialist veteran had spent so much time on the campus lecture trail in recent decades, documenting and dramatizing his experiences as an iconoclastic story-teller with the manner of a rural comedian.

Eleven-year-old H.L. Mitchell—this is a story he told often—rode a special excursion train with his friends and neighbors from his home in Halls to Dyersberg, Tennessee. There, as he saw a black delivery boy roasted alive, he felt an overwhelming chill: "Nauseated, I broke through the crowd and rushed back to the railway station where I stretched out trembling, on the cold ground."

Mitchell heard his first socialist speech three years later, in 1920, soon began reading Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books, campaigned for Robert LaFollette in 1924, and moved with his parents to the cotton district of northeast Arkansas. There, with the outbreak of the Depression, various "share the wealth" ideas grew widely popular. By now a dry-cleaning proprietor, Mitchell and his closest comrade, a filling-station operator, established their own Red Square in a corner of Tyronza for Norman Thomas's 1932 campaign.

The Depression and the New Deal meanwhile accelerated the agrarian social crisis developing around him. Planters used the acreage-restriction payments to move many of the sharecroppers off the land. Norman Thomas, visiting Tyronza, suggested

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the formation of a sharecroppers' organization. A handful of very brave blacks and whites, including Mitchell, founded the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in 1934.

Judged realistically, it was a hopeless cause. Local authorities, augmented by the planters' own hired goons and a very active Ku Klux Klan, lashed out with impunity. (Black Communists and their followers in rural Alabama who met force with force had been driven underground. Howard "Buck" Kester, southern socialist minister and Mitchell's close friend, wore a cyanide pellet around his neck, given him by George Washington Carver, to meet the possibility of torture.) The labor movement nationally was preoccupied with its own immediate problems. Prices fell and agricultural mechanization began in a serious way. Nor could they count on federal help; the White House needed its alliance with the Dixiecrats. Nothing short of the collectivization of cotton production proposed by the STFU—an alternative to reactionary southern agrarianism and more radical, Mitchell recalled, than any proposal by the Communists—could have reversed the tide. The idea had real support among 'croppers, but that was about as far as it went.

Mitchell had on his side only the desperate courage of the sharecroppers and a personal genius for creating publicity. Agricultural strikes by remaining tenants, civil liberties cases, support from Thomas and the Workers Defense League, congressional testimony, and, above all, steady organizing brought the STFU thirty thousand members by the middle 1930s.

The dream ended with the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The STFU desperately needed an affiliation. But its membership was ill-fitted to the customary union structure. It could not possibly make dues payments or supply complex paperwork. Communist complicity with an emerging bureaucracy led Donald Henderson, head of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America to impose impossible demands. As erstwhile comrades in the southern struggle took opposite sides, the STFU membership melted away.

In retrospect, this was a terrible blow to agricultural labor and to the struggle for racial equality. Soon, a massive sit-down of tenants in southeast Missouri brought Mitchell unprecedented national publicity and a boost from Eleanor Roosevelt in her weekly magazine column. Mitchell used the money for relief, and for lobbying Congress. Another outburst of direct action, again in southeast Missouri in 1942, can be fairly called the first massive interracial sit-in of the South. But Mitchell could not consolidate his limited victories, though agricultural labor militancy continued around him for twenty years.

"Washington's smallest lobby," as Mitchell called his staff, continued to press for aid for various relief projects. Meanwhile, he brought his little movement into the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in the 1940s, and eventually merged it with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters. Always, he aided ongoing mobilizations—at one point southern sugar cane workers and fishermen, at other times the western and southwestern agricultural laborers who eventually, although with great difficulty and limited success, made up the United Farm Workers. The outcast status of racial minorities and accelerating mechanization worked against him. Among socialists and liberals his work remained a favorite cause, while AFL head George Meany (even more so than William Green) offered only mean-spirited cynicism. By the early 1970s, Mitchell formally retired. He saw, I think, that the baton had been passed on to Cesar Chavez. Mitch didn't know it yet, but he was ready for activity of a different kind, just as remarkable in its own way.

The enthusiasm of young southern historians for the STFU's story piqued his curiosity, and he arranged to have the extensive files of the union—marvelously preserved and donated to the University of North Carolina—microfilmed as a set. He was off and running. Mitch attended dozens, possibly hundreds of national conventions of historians and academic meetings of historically minded radicals over the next fifteen years. Speaking whenever possible (which was often), he plugged his microfilm collection.

His self-presentation of elderly-radical-as-walking-history had an independent value that, I think, the young understood best. He had a disarming sense of humor and he used it to good purpose. It demythicized him, even as he recreated a narrative in which the civil rights struggle had roots in past agricultural struggles in which socialists had played an active role.

He could be a little saintly, despite his salty reputation as a ladies' man. Unlike some of his Communist opponents of a time fifty years gone, he never seemed to hold a grudge (although he relished telling about Ronald Reagan in 1940s Hollywood—where Mitchell was fundraising—"cheating the CP of its dues" by regularly attending party front functions). He saw everyone, even the plantation owners who wanted his neck, as the victims of class society.

He lived to write a long version and a short version of his story, and to promote a documentary

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film of the STFU, narrated by his friend Eddy Albert.* Michael Harrington, introducing one of these texts, remarked in 1979 that reading it "is like having a conversation with history; not the history of the presidents and princes, but the history of those who do the dying—and the living." In my imagination, the conversation between these two princely plebeians still goes on, a dialogue of socialist values and socialist possibilities in twentieth century America. □

* *Mean Things Happening in the Land*, Montclair, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1979. *Roll the Union On: a Pictorial History of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1988. *Our Land Too—The Legacy of the STFU*. Kudzu Productions, 1988.

Richard Lourie

Does the Soviet Union Exist?

The specter of civil war is often raised in prognostications about the future of the Soviet Union, the great guessing game of the late twentieth century. When asked about the possibility, Andrei Sakharov could only gasp and quote Pushkin: "God save us from a Russian revolt, merciless and blind." But the question is posed in the wrong tense because the Soviet Union has been in a state of civil war ever since the October revolution.

Officially, the Russian Civil War lasted from 1917 to 1920. Ten million people died in battle or from disease and executions. But no sooner had they vanquished the Whites than the Bolsheviks discovered their true enemy was the people itself. The peasants were revolting, the workers were striking, even the radical sailors of Kronstadt took up arms against the Bolsheviks in 1921.

The Bolsheviks had been an embattled minority from November 1917, when, in the USSR's only free election until 1989, the Bolsheviks received 20 percent of the votes, less than half of what the Socialist Revolutionaries got. No party received a majority, but, fascinatingly, 80 percent of the electorate voted far left.

The Bolsheviks' only claim to legitimacy was that they had kept their heads when all around them others were losing theirs, some quite literally. They had won the coup d'état chess game, taking the enemy's king, the Winter Palace. It was a relatively bloodless affair; only six men died.

But the Bolsheviks could not have taken power without the spontaneously created councils, known as soviets of revolutionary workers and soldiers. Local nuclei of power, the soviets controlled regiments, factories, neighborhoods, towns. Lenin's rallying cry was "All power to the Soviets." What he meant was all power to his party, the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks stole the election, the revolution, and even the name "soviet," which they used when forming the USSR, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in 1922. At that time the USSR consisted of Russia, the Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. This union was not entered into freely; considerable convincing was required.

But there were means for that. The first secret police was founded a mere six weeks after the revolution. It was known as the Cheka, an acronym for "Emergency Committee to Combat Counterrevolution and Sabotage." The emergency never ended. And counterrevolution was hardly over when the White Army sailed across the Black Sea to Constantinople in 1920. The Bolsheviks, who, soon after the Civil War, changed their name to the Communist party, could never have held on to their monopoly of power if it had not been for the secret police. They put the "union" in the Soviet Union.

The role of terror as social glue is clear in the case of all the original republics. Proportionally, Georgia suffered more than any other republic under Stalin, who always found his native land's allegiance suspect. As soon as the outbreak of the Second World War liberated the Ukraine from Communist dominance, large numbers of Ukrainians collaborated with the Nazis. The Armenians and Azerbaijanis have given ample proof that they do not identify as Soviet citizens, by going for each other's throats the moment they felt Kremlin control weaken.

But if it has been the threat and use of force that have held the Soviet Union together, what will keep it in one piece if people become convinced that the threat has become empty? The current adhesive is the fear that moving too suddenly might cause the whole gigantic, dilapidated edifice to collapse. And even that is being tested.

The Baltic states know the situation is not ripe yet for complete independence and may be waiting until other parts of the USSR catch up with them in seeing that there is no freedom without sovereignty. The key to the whole business is, of course, the Ukraine—fifty million people, a great source of food, coal, steel, electrical power—where Chernobyl occurred. And where a political Chernobyl may yet occur.

The Baltic states, acting in concert with the Ukraine, could present Moscow with a joint ultimatum for independence. Civil war, which has smoldered throughout Soviet history, would flare up

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Jeremy Larner

GORGEOUS GEORGE

For whose benefit did President Bush invade Panama? How does it affect this country that Bush did not consult Congress? Will the invasion result in better living conditions for Latin America? Will it further long-run objectives of peace, justice, freedom?

Forgive the obvious questions. I'm aware they've been taken up by the odd editorial writer and columnist, but the overall message of American media coverage was that they didn't matter. Partly because reporters accompanying the U.S. forces were confined to quarters, the bulk of what the public saw and read centered on the public relations aspects and proclaimed Bush a winner. Since publicity represents a kind of actuality, Bush is currently able to walk down the street and have the population admire his new clothes.

The walk he takes, how he planned it, and how his plans seemed to succeed are all factual matters, and deserve to be reported as news. But when the reality of publicity is presented with unblinking literalness, it tends to supersede other sorts of reality—and even more strength is acquired by those who would create both leaders and policies through unceasing manipulation.

Symmetrically, as flacks gain power, media coverage increasingly concerns itself with a description of P.R. strategy. When editors pressure reporters for "analysis," this is what they tend to get.

I was among those who admired a profile of Dan Quayle by the *New York Times*'s White House reporter, Maureen Dowd, which appeared in the summer of 1989. Some of my liberal friends resented the article's detailing of Quayle's strategic preparations, his way of working hard at his job. Some were annoyed that the profile contained no perspective on Quayle's assumptions—what else he might be thinking, doing, reading, saying. To me, the piece was value-free, in the fashion newspapers commonly require. I saw the writer's tongue steadfastly in her cheek. If the reader could supply any knowledge about the world's political problems, the facts of the piece subtly but unmistakably revealed its subject's fatuity.

But the straight reporting of silly calculations falls short in situations where political circumstances are in dispute. Even Dowd could not find a way to step outside the earnest idiocy that has characterized the massive "coverage" of recent events in Panama.

Let's pick up Dowd's analysis as of December 24, 1989, when more troops and civilians than anticipated had perished, yet deposed Panamanian president Manuel Noriega had escaped, bloody resistance continued, and Latin American governments were appalled. Elsewhere in the *Times*, one could find political reasons why they were appalled. But Dowd's inside analysis dealt with Bush's personal calculations.

The president—according to "counselors," "advisers," "trusted officials," and "top officials"—felt that Noriega "was thumbing his nose at him." Moreover, Bush felt that he had been "unfairly depicted in the press and Congress as lethargic and indecisive." The details of policy and nonpolicy that contributed to this impression were omitted. The newsworthy fact was that Bush had now "pulled the trigger," and according to a subhead, "The decision to invade bespeaks the President's competitive side."

Yet at this point, the picture was not a clear one, and the reporter had to step outside the circle of inner "strategists" to gain perspective on what had gone awry. The authority she chose to quote was not hampered by involvement with any issue or program. He was "Geoffrey Garin, a Democratic consultant," that is, a publicist on the defensive team. Said Garin: "Panama was not as clean for George Bush as Grenada was for Ronald Reagan. . . . If we see a picture of Noriega laughing on the beach someday, it will be the functional equivalent for George Bush of the crashed helicopters for Jimmy Carter."

At this point, then, Bush was batting with two strikes. Despite reversing an image of himself that had hurt his feelings, he had failed to achieve

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whatever it was Ronald Reagan achieved in Grenada.

A few weeks later, however, all was changed—if not in Panama or in the turbulent, deadly struggles of Central America, at least in the American media ratings. For Noriega had been released from the Vatican embassy and taken to Miami as an American prisoner. "A political jackpot," Lee Atwater gloated on the front page of the *Times*—and the reporter, Michael Oreskes, did not feel obliged to point out Atwater's peculiarly limited use of the word "political." Atwater referred not to the political arrangements of Panama, nor to the living conditions of Latin America, nor to American policies to change those conditions. He referred to Bush's public "image," which the invasion had helped by replacing "a perception that he was timid or indecisive with one that he was disciplined, firm, patient and willing to use force." The American people had now seen Panamanians cheering their "liberators" on television, and even Democrats agreed, and a quote was available from Robert Strauss, not a mere publicist but a coordinator of publicists, who said, "Politically, he's probably pretty well out of a mess in Panama."

The article wound up with Lee Atwater comparing George Bush to Babe Ruth: "It's the political version of Babe Ruth pointing to the fence . . . and then he knocked it out of the stadium." The *Times* added an ironic little kicker: "Many sports historians dismiss the story as a myth conjured to enlarge Ruth's heroic image."

Fair enough—but why bother then? Is Lee Atwater's glorification of his patron news fit to print? And what is the news significance of the weeks of front-page polls that followed, announcing Bush's popularity at an all-time high, comparable, say, to John Kennedy's after the Bay of Pigs? From Kennedy on, every president has tried to put on the football helmet of masculinity each time he initiated military action without democratic debate. By and large their actions have been catastrophic blunders that debased American influence and propped up political privilege and oppression in various parts of the earth. Here I mean "political" in the sense relating to the distribution of power and control, not to the perception of bellicosity that attaches to a given American president.

I've thought there was something phony about every one of these presidential projections of macho toughness, and I can't forget candidate Bush confiding to a dock worker that he'd "kicked some ass" in his debate with Geraldine Ferraro. We can now read in a number of memoirs that Ronald Reagan thought he was George Gipp with a distinguished service record in World War II. Henry Kissinger told Oriana Fallaci he pictured himself as the Lone Ranger, walking down the middle of the street in a frontier town—not long before he turned Chile over to the death squads. But what I think or what the public thinks of these idiot images has little to do with the motives of foreign policy. A year ago, Bush, with the very same yelping voice and febrile snigger, proclaimed the cause of the students in Tiananmen Square. Today, he announces renewed relations with their murderers, oppressors, and jailers. His reasons at either moment have something to do with public perception—but don't they also have to do with power, money, and control? Here is where we really could use a bit more "coverage."

One more word on politics as slogans and poses. American presidents are offensive enough—never mind the latest polls—when they swaggeringly present this country as the world's Number One Team. But there is something disturbing also in the administration's current greeting of the newborn success of internal liberation movements in communist countries. White House statements simply fail to distinguish between the desire for freedom and the desire for capitalism. True enough, most Eastern Europeans seem to favor some form of "free market." But they also want democracy, and for many of them that means a society where the rich don't necessarily grow richer at the expense of the ordinary citizen and the feeling of communal decency. That was the impetus behind the students who gave their lives in China—the resentment of new capitalist elitism as controlled by a Leninist ruling cadre—and the same feeling is reflected in, say, the Polish desire for strong labor unions and religious freedom. Capitalism does not equal democracy, and Eastern Europe, for all its dangers and miseries, is entering into a welter of passionate debate about the adjustment of economic activities to ideals of justice and humanity.

The United States needs such a debate badly, but we won't have it as long as we follow politics like wrestling fans, encouraging leaders who pose in costume, speak in vulgar simplicities, and concern themselves above all with how they are getting their acts across. □

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Bernard Rosenberg

WHEN G.M. WRECKED FLINT

Roger and Me, a radical documentary—marketed as a comedy—about the devastation of auto workers in Flint, Michigan, has, to everyone's amazement, become a sleeper. At this moment it's making pretty big bucks. Why? Go ask. Documentaries, let alone radical documentaries, are for art houses—if any are left. Nevertheless this grim, if sardonically presented, picture is a strong attack on certain corporate practices, specifically those of General Motors, a colossus whose inept managers have done their share to decimate the American economy.

Roger and Me was initially shown at the New York Film Festival, where it received critical and professional huzzahs. Despite such suspect enthusiasm, Warner Bros. undertook to distribute and market this unique product of Dog Eat Dog Films, the brainchild of Michael Moore. A Flint man, son of a G.M. worker, Moore is also a left-wing journalist previously associated with *Mother Jones* and the *Michigan Voice*.

Moore turned from print to screen in a hard-to-define genre for the direct depiction of what happened in his home town and to its inhabitants when G.M., Flint's principal employer, flew the coop. The corporation did not reduce output. It simply switched operations from the Rust Belt in this country to Mexico, where several new plants came into being. South of the Rio Grande, after all, laborers are paid seventy cents an hour, as Moore puts it in a point that very few viewers or reviewers seem to have missed. The point is well taken. So are most of the other points: that G.M. was making good profits and gave its top executive, Roger Smith, a $2 million raise during the time it shut up shop in Flint.

Indeed, the pursuit of Smith by Moore and his camera crew provides the axis on which this film turns. The quest took two and a half years. It culminates in a brief encounter and an exchange—just a few sound bites—at the very end. Dressed mostly in proletarian attire that would by itself bar him from the personal contact that he seeks, Michael tirelessly tracks Roger. What does he want? To make an appointment for an interview or to extend an invitation, as if to say, "Come see the havoc in a one-industry town when that industry disappears. Help me count the human cost."

Even earlier there had been trouble enough in Flint, but at about the time of Reagan's first inauguration, G.M. factories, along with local suppliers, began to close for good. Before long there were thirty thousand unemployed auto workers in Flint. It was here that the giant enterprise got started, here that some fabled sit-down strikes of the 1930s took place, here that our best union, the UAW, had emerged. All this is too breathlessly related by Moore in his capacity as narrator. The *film noir* that we behold requires more background than its writer-director star (or anyone else) could provide. He conveys his own anger rather than that of the bewildered and suddenly jobless work force, his perception, apparently shared by large liberal audiences, of the struggle between capital and labor, but just labor, not *organized* labor. Moore allots only a few seconds to Owen Bieber, a generally worthy successor to the matchless Reuther cohort of UAW leaders. Bieber has reason to be miffed over his organization's getting such short shrift. He's made to look serious but not wholly sympathetic. Five minutes of time, if only to explain that the union does cushion layoffs (a word G.M. adamantly refuses to use), might have been allowed by Moore. Self-defeating greed and insensitivity to the impact it has on others are not the besetting sins of Owen Bieber, who probably feels himself as much a victim as any member of his union.

Moore's central conceit, as I've indicated, is the chase. Rebuffed everywhere by sometimes scary, occasionally rough or oleaginous intermediaries, his energy, fueled by deadpan monomania, never flags. He pursues his quarry to the Grosse Point Yacht Club, the Detroit Athletic Club, the General Motors Building in what was once Motor City. Moore steps into the elevator, pushes a button for the fourteenth floor—and is intercepted by a guard. What does this inappropriately dressed, possibly raffish character want

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on that floor? To see Mr. Smith. Does he have an appointment? No, but he'd like to make one with Mr. Smith's secretary. The guard is a woman who panics. Unsure of being able to handle this burly interloper, she summons help in the form of three buttoned-down middle-management types. Moore insists on a mock exchange of cards and the gentlemen suggest that he write a letter. It's this kind of experience that makes the G.M. chairman and his toadies look bad. Why not? This is a tendentious work. It is meant to send a message.

What about evenhandedness? Now that's a great virtue, but only when there is much to be said for both sides. When one side is grievously wronged and the other is unconcerned or worse, how can the hands be even? Acting like a stockholder, Moore disguises himself as a substantial citizen, dressed in suit and tie. Just as he is about to speak, his mike is turned off. But Chairman Smith on the dais still has a live mike and doesn't know it. So we overhear him expressing his delight: that pest still hasn't nailed him. However, the vignette does its job. And when Smith finally gets trapped at a company Christmas party shortly after reading one of Dickens's more sentimental passages, a quick confrontation does take place. Michael asks about family evictions in Flint. Roger, from on high, sputters: G.M. has nothing to do with that! In this scene there is artfully edited black humor. Not that anyone laughs. Instead, the impulse of New York audiences is to applaud. And if, as some have complained, the chronology is not strictly in order, most of us are quite willing to accept Moore's statement concerning Flint: "Everything that took place in the 1980s was a single blow."

How heavy that blow was and is we see in shots of general dilapidation, boarded-up stores, and oh, those evictions, mostly of blacks, like sights out of the thirties. The garrulous sheriff's deputy is featured, except for Moore, in more footage than any other character. At least his job is secure—and that he had himself been an auto worker for whom life in the factory was hateful, "like being in a prison," only adds to the piquancy of his nasty patter. And he mutters about these hapless souls that it is just like them to be up all night and to sleep all day. Now and then these people are his friends and: "They're lucky to get me. At least they have someone to talk to." But the ingrates say nothing. It is obvious to them that they are homeless. Academics and bureaucrats will consign them to the underclass. Among the bureaucrats we glimpse one woman, standing for more than a few of her gender, working only because her husband is not. She and others like her are the sole supports of families that at present can still pay the rent and keep the house.

There is no exaggerating the importance of that house or the consumer goods that go with it. In the heyday of postwar auto production, Eli Chinoy worked as an participant observer in one of Flint's factories. Out of that immersion for a year or so came an exemplary monograph. Briefly, as Chinoy saw it, young men became factory operatives not because any of them liked spending a lot of time in dirty, noisy work sites but because, with care, they could save enough money to start a business of their own. In time the entrepreneurial dream faded. The workers grew older. They settled for rented homes, for cars and appliances. Not the best of lives, but not the worst either. And they pinned their hopes on the next generation. That the cycle persisted from generation to generation did not entirely dampen their hopes. Even without upward mobility the status quo was tolerable. Then came homelessness and downward mobility.

How to make a living? A group of ex–auto workers, realizing perhaps that they live in the postindustrial age and in a so-called service economy, find employment at a fast-food joint. So what if it pays only minimum wages? Well, the men aren't up to it. Fast food requires fast work. And these veterans of time-and-motion speed-up are too slow. We watch them being fired. For these slowpokes the alternative to productive employment is not other less remunerative "service" employment. It is unemployment.

Somehow none of this tickles my risibles. Nor those of anybody I have observed, nor of anybody with whom I have discussed the film. They and I do find much of what comes to us from the affluent in Flint to be contemptible. But not, definitely not, laughable. Men and women threshing about in a vain effort not to fall out the socioeconomic system do not supply material for comedy. Their acts are acts of pathos.

I could be wrong, but if Moore did take cheap shots at helpless people, ridiculing them without causing us to jeopardize our natural sympathy for the underdog, I was completely deceived. The last item that comes to us as the credits roll is a line to the effect that *Roger and Me* cannot be seen in Flint. Why not? For the reason that Flint no longer has any movie theaters. What the city does have is a "state of the art" spanking new jailhouse. Street crime has soared. Plenty of money has been found to contain it.

Go see the flick. But, if you're looking for a barrel of laughs, you'd better take your own supply of laughing gas along with you. □

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Nick Salvatore

CONFLICTS IN A PROGRESSIVE UNION

UPHEAVAL IN THE QUIET ZONE: A HISTORY OF HOSPITAL WORKERS' UNION, LOCAL 1199, by Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989. 298 pp. $9.95, paper.

For almost two generations Local 1199, a militant union of poor and minority hospital workers, has been extolled both as a force for change in its members' lives and as an advocate for progressive policies in urban and union politics. Important improvements in wages and working conditions went hand in hand with the union's presence in the political world. Rarely was there a demonstration to protest civil rights abuses, to oppose the Vietnam War, or to reverse the nation's nuclear policy that did not have its 1199 contingent—visible, vocal, vibrant. During the last two decades especially the example of this union (whose membership never grew significantly above 100,000) served as a model to those attracted to the ideal of a dynamic interracial union whose institutional politics engaged yet transcended the narrow "porkchop" approach dominant in the labor movement.

How depressing, then, was the news of the early 1980s that told, first as rumor and then as painful fact, of profound internal factionalism, of bitter and deep-rooted racial antagonism, and of crude red-baiting by one side counterbalanced by equally crude attacks on opponents' cultural and intellectual abilities by the other. The proposed transition of power from Leon Davis, 1199's longtime president, to Doris Turner, a former dietary clerk at Lenox Hill Hospital, coupled with the possible merger between 1199 and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), caused serious tension. But the viciousness of the factional fighting suggested that even more powerful, disruptive issues were at stake. The image of 1199 was now called into question.

It was with such concerns in mind, I think, that Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg wrote *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone*. Although quite sympathetic supporters of the traditional union leadership, the authors were not writing a sponsored history. With a minor exception they received no funding from the union and were never obligated to submit their work for approval. The book's origins were in the 1970s, before the recent upheavals; indeed, these events overtook Fink and Greenberg as they wrote their book. But it is perhaps this very juxtaposition that accounts for an odd interpretative structure. The untroubled vision with which the book began proved inadequate for analyzing a more complex reality. Despite an occasional nod in the direction of this complexity, the authors are clearly sympathetic to the traditional union leadership and the politics they represented. This, in turn, blunted their ability to analyze these recent tensions or to understand these tensions in a broader social and cultural context. This is doubly surprising in that the authors are vocal advocates of the new labor history, with its emphasis on the experience of the inarticulate masses as a key to historical understanding.

As the first book-length treatment of 1199, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone* does contribute to our understanding. Sketches of leaders and activist members, extensive interviews, and the first gleanings from the archive of union documents are useful, as is testimony from such an insightful hospital administrator as Norman Metzger. The authors provide an intelligible narrative of the evolution of the union's jurisdictional structure, which raises some interesting questions about the meaning of industrial unionism in the late twentieth-century service sector. But there are also serious problems with the authors' discussion of crucial aspects of 1199 history. I would note three: the problem of union democracy, the analysis of the union as a bargaining agent, and the interpretation of the internal politics and culture of the union. In these areas, the authors' uncritical embrace of the

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progressive image of the union largely prevents them from developing a critical analysis of the more troublesome complexity their own research revealed.

The question of the union's democratic structure has at least two related meanings. The first concerns the union's image as a democratic institution assuring that the rank and file is heard and heeded. A second meaning raises the question of the union's relationship with the American Communist party in light of 1199's image as a democratic institution. To their credit the authors do recognize that the union's governing structure, centralized in the person of Leon Davis, "verged" on a benevolent despotism; they also recognize that the delegate assemblies became, as the union grew, unwieldy instruments of democracy in the absence of smaller, work-related councils. Yet little effort is made to relate these points to the larger theme that stresses, in different language, the militant democratic nature of this union's governance. On the one hand, the reader is frequently told that the key to 1199's organizing success lay in its ability to achieve, as in the 1959 strike in New York, the "effective integration of union organizers with indigenous work group leaders." Yet Leon Davis himself questioned that image when he noted that "there are no clear answers about how to run a democratic union, unless it's a very small union like the old AF of L craft unions, towns in Vermont, or building trades locals. With a big union and power, what do you do?" Davis's frankness is refreshing, even if the problem demands a more searching analysis.

This question of internal democracy assumes greater importance when tied to the question of Communist party influence. The authors repeatedly note that party ties were irrelevant, if only because the party itself had such a small political meaning; and they comment that Davis and other top leaders kept a "permanent public silence" concerning their own past affiliations. If any party influence remained, Fink and Greenberg tell us, it was essentially an informal set of personal characteristics: "habits of mind, a disciplined behavior, and a network of associations based on 'the old days.'" Instead, the driving force within the union remained those "indigenous work group leaders," the rank-and-file activists they refer to as the "Militant Minority," many of whom became elected stewards.

Unbeknown to these activists there was another structure within the union whose presence was widespread but whose scope of influence remains unclear. There was certainly a party cell within the stewards assembly during the 1950s and perhaps later as well. The 1199 staff also reflected those "habits of mind." One longtime organizer recalled with approval that the staff "was always a very good staff . . . we went along with everything" the leadership requested. Nor were these "habits" simply a memory of things past. As late as the early 1980s, the authors reveal in a footnote, "[A] party-based network, a kind of 'club within a club,' probably did reassert itself." "Habits of mind," coupled with a disciplined network that survived for more than three decades within a small union dominated by a president who shared those "habits"—this simply demands a more sustained analysis.

A second area of concern centers on the union's role in collective bargaining. The authors provide detailed information on both the growing membership and the important improvements in wages and work conditions achieved during the 1960s and 1970s. Their discussion of how the union transformed what was a defeat in the 1959 strike into victory by 1962 is quite insightful. They also recognize that, as Norman Metzger put it, negotiations during the 1960s and early 1970s were "a game," marked less by adversarial bargaining than by the reliance of both sides on the ultimate intervention of the city and state governments with their large infusions of dollars. The union played the game well and never once questioned its role within the health care industry: its job was to win increases and to leave the management of hospitals to management. So traditional was their self-perception, moreover, that union leaders refused, in order to protect jobs, to advocate closing municipal hospitals—even though they recognized the value in fiscal and medical terms of so doing. There was nothing wrong with 1199 for taking any of these positions. Just the opposite. The union recognized its limited power, understood its need for allies, and quietly appreciated the convergence of forces that included, at the least, a sustained economic growth and a resurgent liberalism that helped their organizing drives in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Fink and Greenberg argue that 1199's success must be seen as part of the expansion of collective bargaining in the public sector. Unfortunately, the book provides us with very little information about that expansion or its effect upon the union. Further, while claims for worker militancy awkwardly rub shoulders with the recognition of a fortunate convergence of outside forces, there is little discussion of why 1199 was largely unable to transport its victories beyond New York City. Difficulties in organizing Charleston may be evi-

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dent, but the 1965–66 failure at Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville, just outside New York City, is harder to fathom. Is it possible that there were other ingredients than "Militant Minorities," available dollars, and a sympathetic governor that were essential to success, especially during the early years of hospital organizing? Despite the authors' repeated denial, it remains possible that an ethnic component—specifically a secular, liberal Jewish identity shared by labor, management, and critical segments of the New York public—remained central. Questions that might have been raised by the Bronxville experience might also have helped to comprehend organizing failures in Durham, Baltimore, Dayton, and Pittsburgh. Only in Philadelphia has 1199 been able to transport, to a degree, its New York success, but in the absence of an extended discussion we have no context for understanding these different experiences.

Fink and Greenberg stress the larger political arena as central to collective bargaining for these workers. Believing as they do that "it is the duty of historians to try to reconstruct big events with an eye to the contributing force of many smaller ones," they argue that a community wide political engagement emerged from hospital organizing, proved central to 1199's success, and reasserted "a labor-based vision of social reform." These assertions, however, rest on thin evidence. Whatever demonstrations did occur "in the community" were far less significant than the repeated workings of traditional politics that demanded that 1199 leaders find "a path from Van Arsdale to Rockefeller," that is, from the head of New York's Central Labor Council to the governor. Further, no evidence is provided that elected officials saw a threat to their position if they did not accede to 1199's demands, nor did the authors examine the papers of mayors (especially Robert F. Wagner and John Lindsay) or governors (Nelson Rockefeller) to uncover what did motivate them regarding 1199. In this context claims for a "labor-based vision of social reform" are but rhetorical and wistful. It should be remembered that it was the same Harry Van Arsdale, and the building trades that made up the core of the Central Labor Council, who were the objects of summer-long demonstrations in 1963 that at their peak involved more than 1,200 arrests *daily* at a Brooklyn construction site, protesting the continued city-wide, systematic exclusion of minority workers from the trades. Neither Van Arsdale nor Wagner, Lindsay, Rockefeller had difficulty in operating on two or more levels simultaneously. It should be the "duty" of historians, at the least, to understand that.

The final concern, and perhaps the most important, focuses on Fink and Greenberg's discussion of the internal politics and culture of the union. The authors justly praise 1199 for its commitment to interracial unionism, for its celebration of cultural diversity among its members, and for its embrace, long before it became politically fashionable, of a rainbow-coalition approach. They also note that the leaders operated out of a quite different cultural matrix than did the majority of members. In the authors' inability to understand the relationship of these two traditions is revealed the central weakness of their analysis.

With a certain insight Fink and Greenberg discuss the culture of the leaders. These men were self-professed cosmopolitans who inhabited a world of ideas freed from the religious rituals that had bound past generations. That, in a union with a large proportion of minority women, the defining figures were white Jewish men, some with quite intense youthful religious experiences—the leaders themselves thought this to be of little import. Far more important was their belief in a new cosmopolitan identity, their belief that through intellect and politics they had transcended their particular ethnic origins. Adherents, through Marx, of "rational enlightenment," they valued—after a "bow to ethnic and racial particularism" among the members—"an appreciation of high culture" as a goal for individual union members. "What we want to do," Moe Foner once explained, "is to open up new horizons to our members. I'm not saying they're going to become inveterate theater goers, but like Jewish mothers say about chicken soup, 'It ain't going to hurt.' " This theme of secularization, and perhaps even Americanization, filtered through the union, although not everyone embraced all aspects of the idea. Even in its benign form it had more than a touch of condescension.

But there was also a darker side to this cosmopolitan perspective, about which the available evidence suggests the leadership group possibly remained unconscious. As Leon Davis said most bluntly: "We took backward people and elevated them." The secularized world of left politics and intellectual discussion was the model against which others in the union were judged—and many found deficient. Catholic workers, one Hispanic organizer commented in the 1960s, were terribly difficult to organize because "when they see a nun, [they] think it's something high." But Catholic workers were not the only ones whose culture seemed an obstacle. Given the leftist world view, with its belief in the power of "an exploitative and corrupt corporate and

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political world" to influence working people, the culture of workers *qua* workers was also suspect. Without the guidance and direction of the union elite, the union's very success might lead workers astray. Yet even closely held reins of guidance had consequences, as Leon Davis dimly perceived in 1979 when he complained about the dependence of the members in relation to the staff. "I am beginning to appreciate some of the older conservative unions," he intoned, "who expect the worker to stand up for his rights and on his own. I am beginning to think that we . . . overservice the members." Without reflection on the cultural world he helped create within the union, Davis could only blame the "victim" for the problem.

Nowhere is this tension more obvious, and nowhere is the authors' analysis more brittle, than in the discussion of Doris Turner's succession to the 1199 presidency following Davis's retirement. A black activist for more than two decades by the time she assumed the presidency in 1982, Turner had worked her way up the union ladder and won the fierce loyalty of many black and Hispanic workers. Although she was often pitted, in private discussions by the leaders, against Henry Nicholas in the competition for succession, in reality neither potential candidate received a clean bill of political health. Both were found lacking, the authors suggest, "in some vague yet vital way" by the leadership. In part they lacked higher education and exposure to a sophisticated intellectual world. More explicitly, and without a trace of vagueness, the leaders felt these two "indigenous work group leaders" lacked the experience that had been provided by membership in the Communist party. "How do you teach a world view?" Moe Foner once asked of these potential leaders. "To us it was like breathing." Try as the original leadership group might to infuse their breath into Turner, she resisted, and was considered lazy and stubborn by her "teachers."

Fink and Greenberg pay some attention to the explosive racial aspect of the dispute. But they seem genuinely confused, as undoubtedly many of the leaders themselves were, as to how and why Doris Turner turned out as she did. Turner's religious beliefs, unfortunately noted only in limited footnotes, perplex them. On assuming office, Turner distributed a religious newspaper to the staff, allowed Bible meetings and prayer groups at union headquarters, and delivered to the staff religiously justified arguments in behalf of capital punishment and prayer in the schools and against abortion.

The authors present this material without comment, in a context that assumes no sympathy with Turner—perhaps much as the leaders and staff themselves did in 1982. This is unfortunate, because serious discussion of Turner's religious beliefs might have led the authors to ask the single most important question about the leadership, the politics, and the culture of Local 1199: Did no one, among the leaders and the staff, over a period of more than twenty years of intimate and exhausting activism, ever sense the deep roots of Turner's religiosity? Did no one ever acknowledge that her "stupidity" may have masked a profound cultural chasm? Had the authors raised these and related questions, they might have discovered that Turner and other 1199 members, like other humans, can and do lead multiple lives, appreciating the value of a union and yet remaining committed to their own "parochial" ethnic and religious beliefs. But the real disappointment is that, in not asking those questions about Turner, the authors lost the opportunity for a serious exploration of the complex habits of mind and culture of such union members.

The failure of Fink and Greenberg is that they are unable to distance themselves from the perspective of the union leaders and thus, after the rhetorical dust has settled, show little understanding of the rank and file as it actually is. Nor do they possess the needed critical distance to evaluate the culture of the leaders. At root the problem is that the authors treat that leadership culture in a moralistic manner that places it beyond historical analysis. They do not recognize that, for all its urban sophistication, that culture is also a manifestation of a specific ethnic experience: that the very claim to have transcended such limiting parochial tendencies is itself a variant of considerable standing within Jewish and other ethnic experiences.

In the 1199 context, then, one need not be Jewish to adhere to these professed cosmopolitan values. The result is that the authors cannot recognize that this specific culture carries with it attitudes toward religion, types of educational experience, and patterns of political and institutional loyalty that differ sharply from the cultural experiences of many of the members. Unable to see that rank-and-file members and activists were able to maintain, simultaneously, public and private identities, Fink and Greenberg have written a study of a leadership largely as it saw itself.

In a relatively short period, Local 1199 has achieved notable successes in improving the wages and working conditions of its members. That it has done so while also working for social justice is a fact both members and leaders can proudly proclaim. Yet precisely because of this joint role, a thorough and searching study of 1199 is needed. The progressive image needs to be appreciated, but it also must be

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critically understood in relation to the actual political and cultural world of the union. In the midst of 1199's civil war David Livingston, president of District 65-UAW, asked with great sadness, "What could be worse than a busted Stradivarius?" Perhaps, one wishes the authors had replied, a dented steel drum. □

Ruth Jordan

LEARNING HOW TO TEACH

LIVES ON THE BOUNDARY, THE STRUGGLES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMERICA'S UNDERPREPARED, by Mike Rose. The Free Press, a division of Macmillan, Inc., New York, 1989. 288 pp. $22.95.

As immigration swelled at the end of the nineteenth century, the nation's "real" Americans dug in their heels and created an oddly romantic and destructive notion of democracy called the "melting pot theory," which they applied relentlessly to immigrant schoolchildren. Recently, that myth has been replaced with one that describes our nation as a "rich, multicultural tapestry" of peoples. These conflicting messages permeate our educational system, giving mixed signals to children and teachers about what it takes to be a successful student and just who is smart and who is not.

But, when it comes to measuring educational achievement, we're still stirring the melting pot. We honor cultural differences by noting the contributions of immigrants, but we're quite clear that the core American culture is white Anglo-Saxon. We treat the nation's schoolchildren as though they were all the same, judging them by norms that require a large number to fail in order for some to come out on top and others to fall in the middle. This need to categorize and judge by standardized values and the damage that it does is the central issue Mike Rose addresses in this extraordinary book that is at once biography, sociology, and educational theory.

Rose says that not least among the problems of the poor is that they are taught early on to think of themselves as stupid, unsuccessful, and pathologically unable to meet the standards of middle-class America. After all, since drug taking, criminal behavior, early sexual experiences, teen pregnancy, and school dropouts are consistently linked with poverty, and since these are matters of human behavior, it must be the behavior of the poor that causes their problems, not their poverty and powerlessness. And the poor, says Rose, believe it as much as do the privileged.

He begins by discussing his own origins and development. Rose, now associate director of UCLA's writing program, was born to poor Italian immigrants who might now be called part of the "underclass." His was a childhood marked by family failure and crises.

> The people I grew up with were retired from jobs that rub away at the heart or were working hard at jobs to keep their lives from caving in or were diving headlong into a barren tomorrow: junkies, alcoholics, and mean kids . . . looking to throw a punch. I developed a picture of human existence that rendered it short and brutish or sad and aimless or long and quiet with rewards like afternoon naps, the evening newspaper and walks around the block. . . . [W]hen years later, I was introduced to humanistic psychologists like . . . Maslow and . . . Rogers with their visions of self actualization, or even Freud with his sober dictum about love and work, it all sounded like a glorious fairy tale, a magical account of a world full of possibility.

At enormous sacrifice his parents sent him to a rigid Catholic secondary school where he and his fellow inmates were bullied or bored into submission. Worse than that, a terrible mistake was made. The results of his standardized Stanford-Binet test were mixed up with those of another Rose who had scored at the low end of the scale. That meant placement in a vocational track where academic subjects were replaced by low-level English, typing, and business math. Why didn't his parents protest? How could they know? What did it all mean to them?

Like his parents, Rose's teachers trusted the system, not bothering to wonder about his placement. And not surprisingly students in the vocational track lived out these expectations. They were surly, unruly, didn't pay attention in class, did not progress. But, as Rose points out, they were far from brain-dead: they constantly engaged in enthusiastic discussions about cars, sports, and street philosophy. The problem was that they were unable to conduct their discussion in the style of academic life:

> The discourse of academics is marked by terms and expressions that represent an elaborate set of shared concepts and orientations . . . you could almost define a university education as an initiation into a variety of powerful ongoing discussions. . . . All students require such an opportunity. But those . . . with less-than-privileged educations, especially those from the lower classes, are particularly in need. They are less likely to have participated, in any extended way, in such discussions in the past. They won't have the confidence or the moves to enter it, and can begin to feel excluded, out of place, put off by a language they can't command. . . .

In Rose's case, the school's mistake was discovered and his future took a different turn. But the

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experience made him particularly sensitive to the needs of those not heard or understood.

Under the tutelage of some extraordinary teachers, Rose entered college and began moving along a track to university tenure. Then, perhaps moved by his own sense of being an "outsider," he joined the Teacher Corps and taught minority children. His work with very young African American and Latino children showed him that their interpretation of the school's curriculum often made them appear stupid or learning-disabled to their teachers, when in fact their responses were simply different.

He applied this same carefully individualized approach in his work with Vietnam veterans and older students who entered college under the open admissions policies of the seventies. Excerpts from their notebooks give insight into the harmful assumptions built into our academic life.

Rose contends that our schools are wedded to methods of evaluation that set the stage for failure—both for the student and the schools. Standardized tests—even when properly administered—are useless because, he says, "They focus on failure." Created at a period in the nineteenth century when educators thought they could apply the standards of an industrial age to the educational process, they concentrate on right and wrong answers, and right and wrong language usage. It is the pedagogy of efficiency, an educational theory founded on quantification.

Overlayered on testing has been the growth of medical theory that disease can have an impact on behavior. This approach seeks to find explanations for deviation from the "right" way by finding "defects" in the student's learning abilities. Educators then search for "handicaps and disabilities" that block the student's grasp of the information as it is presented and as it is tested. Rose asks us to reject these measures and tools and proposes a more challenging course. He warns us that the current wave of school reform will be no different from those of the past if it is rooted in achieving standards that are merely a reflection of the dominant culture and life ways. If, as a society, we continue to judge those who fail as stupid or clinically disabled or even morally warped, we will compound the inequities of our economic system and continue to isolate the poor, minorities and all other outsiders.

Teachers, personnel directors, college professors, admissions officers, and other gatekeepers stand at the doorway to success. Before they shut that door they need to analyze the "logic of error," as Rose calls it, in the unexpected responses they receive to tests and interviews. One does not have to be a cultural relativist to avoid ethnocentric arrogance.

Mike Rose sets out a difficult task. To fulfill the promise of democracy through education, we must approach our learners where they actually are. He shows ways to analyze their work to find out what it is they are saying. He demonstrates what it means to ask them respectfully why they have answered questions in an unexpected way. And he urges us to honor their years of experience as workers, mothers and fathers, community activists, survivors, and say to ourselves: "These people have made it in cruel circumstances. They are smart. They are able. They are used to regarding the world in a certain way. How can I best understand that and how can I unlock the secrets of the world of education so that they can come in too?"

This isn't done by prescribed curriculums or required book lists and predetermined compilations of facts every child should know. This can only be done by humanists who, like Mike Rose, know their fields and use their skills and instincts of love and respect to help the young. □

Oliver Conant

A PARADE OF PREJUDICES

WARTIME: UNDERSTANDING AND BEHAVIOR IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, by Paul Fussell. Oxford University Press, 1989. 330 pp. $19.95.

THANK GOD FOR THE ATOM BOMB AND OTHER ESSAYS, by Paul Fussell. Summit Books, 1988. 298 pp. $17.95.

Paul Fussell is a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, a specialist in eighteenth century literature who first came to attention outside the academy in 1975 with the publication of *The Great War and Modern Memory*. That book earned him a reputation as a cultural historian of considerable acumen. A study of literary responses to the First World War, the book established the centrality of the experience of the trenches in shaping the modern imagination of war.

Since then, Fussell's work, while almost always lively, has rarely lived up to the high standard of his first foray beyond a specialized readership. More and more he seems to adopt scornful, embattled postures, substituting a ready sardonicism and a parade of prejudices for reasoned argument, as in his *Class: A Guide through the American Status System*, a sour and ungenerous book that traded on American

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fears and uncertainties about class by invidious categorizations of people into "low-proles," "upper-proles," "middles," and so on. The authors Fussell has most consistently singled out for praise—Johnson, Swift, Arnold, and, in our time, George Orwell and Edmund Wilson—were all capable of great asperity of judgment and even excessive scorn, but their scorn and asperities are not what we remember or value them for. Fussell seems determined to make himself into the kind of writer who just does not care if his rancor seems excessive or his vehemence misplaced or his views eccentric.

Fussell's most recent book, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War,* although it contains material of surpassing interest—chiefly, the inevitably moving firsthand accounts from American and British officers and enlisted men—is a determinedly eccentric enterprise. In it Fussell contends that "for the past fifty years the Allied war has been sanitized and romanticized almost beyond recognition by the sentimental, the loony patriotic, and the bloodthirsty." The only way to make any headway against the public's romantic delusions is to revisit every last detail of the experience of wartime as Fussell has been able to reconstruct it from his reading and personal experience. (Fussell was a second lieutenant in the infantry and saw combat in France in 1944–45.) Much of the sort of thing that Fussell has assembled in *Wartime*—that basic training is a bore, that officers can be petty sadists, that the rationing of basic provisions was irksome, that mass advertising could be even more nauseating than it is in peacetime, that there were snafus, that Americans engaged in ugly national and racial stereotyping, that powerful explosives and high velocity projectiles kill and maim horribly, that "precision bombing" is a misnomer, that army chow was lousy, that army slang could be brilliantly funny and deadly dull—could not possibly seem like news to anyone, except on the eccentric premise of a deluded public nurtured on falsely romanticized and cleaned-up versions of the war. That practically all the evidence Fussell cites is from published sources, widely available for years, hardly makes this premise seem any less eccentric.

Unlike *The Great War and Modern Memory, Wartime* only passingly acknowledges the interest and power of imaginative writing about war. For the most part Fussell bestows his attention either on sentimental journalism and middlebrow schlock, or on such entirely nonliterary materials as the slogans on recruiting posters, training manuals, pamphlets for the consumption of the troops, the guff put out by public relations flaks for image-conscious generals, and "patriotic" display ads. But Fussell's excursions into what trendy English departments like to call "semiotics," or "mass culture studies," are far from the most noticeable irritants in a book that provokes mainly by such (quite representative) remarks as the following: "It [the Second World War] was a savage, insensate affair . . . hardly approachable without some currently unfashionable theory of human mass insanity and inbuilt, inherited corruption," or "The war seemed so devoid of ideological content that little could be said about its positive purposes that made political or intellectual sense, especially after the Soviet Union joined the great crusade against what until then had been stigmatized as totalitarianism. After that embarrassment, less said the better. . . ."

The first of these statements is portentous nonsense. The Second World War, while undoubtedly savage and insensate, was not only that, and was anyway not some unitary "affair." If it is not at all clear what Fussell means by "some currently unfashionable theory of human mass insanity," it is fairly clear what he means by "inbuilt, inherited corruption"; he means a belief in original sin, which makes as much sense to require of historians of the Second World War as it does to imagine them beholden to putatively fashionable theories of mass sanity as they write their accounts, say, of Hitler's rise to power. The reader who comes upon the second statement may feel like pausing over the implications of such a word as "stigmatized" but is not encouraged by the tone of it and other such utterances in *Wartime*—the tone of aggressive barroom fulmination—to expect arguments amenable to fact or reason. There is in Fussell, as in his hero Evelyn Waugh, a pronounced esthetic distaste for the inanities and vulgar excesses of the Anglo-American war effort, and for the drab conformities of life in wartime. Stubbornly, he refuses to acknowledge that for all its inanities and stupidity the war did have a larger, overriding purpose: the destruction of nazism and fascism, of Hitler and his allies. Just why Fussell supposes that to think of the war this way can only falsify or sentimentalize it beyond recognition is never satisfactorily explained. But then prejudices need not be explained, merely asserted.

Unlike the generally somber note of *Wartime*, Fussell's tone in his preceding book, *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*, a collection of essays, is cheery, with an occasional discordant outburst of disdain for his academic colleagues, "humorless critical doctrinaires with grievances (Marxist, Feminist, what-have-you)." He loves to present himself as one of the last honest characters in a world swarming with

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hypocrites and fools. Now and again something like a reproving, schoolmasterish note, oddly prim, may be heard. This effect is intensified by Fussell's fondness for a sort of pseudo-Johnsonian diction: he speaks of tourists "conglobulating in a close mass," urges a "reprehension of this ethical indecency," and calls Norman Mailer a "professional controvertist." His occasional writing, which is frequently interspersed with personal asides, is entertaining but generally lacking in charm. It may be that Fussell is a man who feels himself too much beset by what he regards as the manifold idiocies, vulgarity, and spreading mediocrity of modern existence, and one too busy applying the corrective lash of his wit, to bother about being charming.

The *New Republic* printed Fussell's title essay (under its inoffensive original title, "Hiroshima: A Soldier's View") in 1981, on the occasion of the forty-second anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The heart of the piece is a highly emotional recounting of the enormous joy and relief that flooded the young Second Lieutenant Fussell when he heard about the bombing. The significance—the blessedness—of the news for Fussell, then as now, lay all in this: that this same Second Lieutenant Fussell, in the summer of 1945 just back from the European theater, where his platoon had been virtually wiped out in front of him and where he had been severely wounded in the back and leg by shell fragments from a German mortar, was not going to be forced to take part in the planned invasion of Japan; that he and his comrades were not going to be "obliged in a few months to rush up the beaches near Tokyo assault-firing while being machine-gunned, mortared and shelled"; that, incredibly, "we were going to live. We were going to grow to adulthood after all. The killing was all going to be over, and peace was actually going to be the state of things." It is this experience of being released miraculously from imminent and hideous death, coming after a prolonged previous exposure to violent death on the battlefield, that prompts Fussell to thank God for the atom bomb, forever and ever, world without end, amen.

Fussell's prayerful impulse is understandable. What is less understandable is that he evidently regards this experience as furnishing all the justification needed for deciding in the affirmative the difficult question of whether the United States should have dropped the bombs. Even less explicable is Fussell's confidence that he can decide on the merits of everyone's thinking about the bombing entirely on the basis of whether they have gone through the same experience he has. But this is evidently close to what he believes. Does John Kenneth Galbraith think that the Japanese would have surrendered by November without an invasion? Well, what can he know about it?—he worked in the Office of Price Administration during the war. Does the historian Michael Sherry think that there should have been a delay between the test explosions in New Mexico and the real thing? Again, what can he know?—why, when the bombs were dropped, "He was going on eight months old, in danger only of falling out of his pram." It is true that at one point in *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*, Fussell remarks, "in speaking thus of Galbraith and Sherry I'm aware of the offensive implications *ad hominem*." Having worked himself into the most terrific lather of indignation, he suddenly remembers that some forms of discourse are governed by rules. Right away, though, he plunges recklessly on, asserting in the next sentence that "what's at stake in an infantry assault is so entirely unthinkable to those without the experience of one, or several, or many, even if they possess very wide-ranging imaginations and warm sympathies, that experience is crucial in this case." When Michael Walzer, in his reply to Fussell's original *New Republic* piece, refused to be deterred from the obligation to think responsibly about the bombing (which he termed "an act of terrorism"), Fussell shot back by noting, with an evident air of settling matters, that when the bombs were dropped "Michael Walzer, for all the emotional warmth of his current argument, was ten years old."

One might well imagine that to the average reader, or at least to the average veteran, Fussell's remarks could not be improved upon. When I last visited my local hardware store, one of the few remaining redoubts for expressions of unreconstructed masculinity on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, I carried with me a copy of *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*. Spying the title, a brawny, grizzled old guy who was ordering massive quantities of what looked like plumbing fixtures turned to me and said, "I don't know what that book is or who wrote it, but he's right—and I oughta know 'cause I was there!" Was it, I wonder, in hopes of eliciting just some such informed appreciation, from just such a boon companion, that Fussell was moved to give his book its present title?

Fussell's essay on Orwell in *Thank God*, "George Orwell: The Critic as Honest Man," is a tribute, but it's full of revealing ambivalence. Orwell had a powerful and active moral and political imagination. It is perhaps this which renders Fussell, for all that he finds to admire in Orwell's "stylistic techniques," a little uncomfortable in his appraisal. Despite the strange turns in his career as a critic, Fussell possesses many estimable critical attributes—

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curiosity, a lively relation to language, a sense of humor, a sociological knowingness about literature, and an ethnographic interest in manners and mores. However, on the evidence of his two recent books, an active moral and political imagination is not conspicuous among them. George Orwell may be said to have possessed a little of Fussell's much prized experience of combat—after all, he had been shot in the throat in Spain. Still, it is difficult to conceive of him ever publicly thanking God for the atom bomb. □

Josephine Hendin

PYNCHON'S AMERICA

VINELAND, by Thomas Pynchon. Little, Brown & Company, 1990. 385 pp. $19.95.

Vineland is a requiem for Pynchon's sixties generation and the politics and culture it produced. It offers an America of those who have searched for self-transcendence along opposing ideological paths: the yearners for power and position who in the eighties find themselves Reaganites and the pacifist politicoes of ecstasy who, searching for deathlessness, found middle age. Each group feels betrayed in an America in which no ideology, no conviction, and no politics really matter anymore. It is 1984 and the national mission is Rex 84—the reelection of the president who believes that trees cause pollution. Rollickingly surreal, filled with wackily named characters, and boasting a plot more complicated than an Italian opera, *Vineland* only seems like a vacation from high seriousness.

No other novel has so pitilessly taken for its subject the course and shape of recent history or so provocatively implied that the establishment and counterculture have served as unwitting collaborators in the destruction of an old American faith in freedom, merit, and substance. In this McLuhanatic novel, the major force for both reaction and revolution seems to be electronics technology; the medium is the only message that counts. Wildly imaginative, witty, and sad, its ebullient writing discloses yet a new dispiritedness. Drawing on imagery from computer graphics, Pynchon sees people as pixels (dots) on a screen grid, alternatively visible or invisible, substantial or ghostly in a soulless display. In that videogame world, issues shift like moving images and all that counts is the Big Picture.

This California novel, plotted as a love triangle and a tale of generations, opens up an America you might call Filmclip Nation. In the sixties a group of insurgent students starts a protest at the College of the Surf in what they believe should be an endless Summer of Love orchestrated by the People's Republic of Rock and Roll. One protester is our "heroine," Frenesi, a radical filmmaker who sees the camera as a gun and filming injustice as an attack on it. But an affair with an FBI prosecutor, Brock, introduces Frenesi to the sexiness of a gun and induces her to help murder a radical young math professor whose name, Weed Atman (Marijuana Soul), suggests his perpetual high. Atman's death provokes the violent retaking of the campus and, ironically, the beginning of the end of the old politics of confrontation. Frenesi marries Zoyd Wheeler, a loving doper, to find refuge from Brock. When a daughter named Prairie, fathered either by Zoyd or by Brock, is born, Frenesi abandons all three to work independently for the FBI.

The culminating action of the novel involves a battle that isn't. Zoyd has raised Prairie in Vineland, a northern California forest town redolent of an earlier wilderness of untouched spaces but now encroached on by LSD devotees, marijuana growers, cable television, developers who know forests were "born to be suburbs," and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Adding to the town are Thanatoids, the shadows of men who fought in Vietnam and who came back in a half-life, and the ghosts of Weed and others who have been betrayed and seek "Karmic readjustment." There the drama of the sixties and the eighties is supposed to erupt in a violent battle in the War on Drugs and in the rough confrontation of Brock, Zoyd, Frenesi, and Prairie. Brock the Prosecutor, armed with helicopters, marijuana defoliants, and Civil RICO (Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act, which allows seizures in civil cases), leads an attack against the peaceful misfits of the town. But wait! On the verge of success, about to abduct Prairie, Brock's helicopter is recalled because Reagan has withdrawn funding for the drug raids. Antidrug activism was, like all else in the novel, only a show.

The character types are familiarly Pynchonesque: the proto-fascist Prosecutor is a pale reflection of the V-2 engineer Weissman of *Gravity's Rainbow,* and Frenesi, arch-betrayer, sought by Brock, Zoyd, and her daughter, recalls the double agent Katje of *Gravity's Rainbow* or the absent maternal force in *V.* As V. functioned as the "mother" of the twentieth century, so Frenesi epitomizes an experimentation with violence, obsession with power, role playing, and treachery that may make her Pynchon's spirit of the past twenty years. What has changed from

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Pynchon's earlier work is the softer pitch of his tension and overt rage.

Virtually every reviewer has called this Pynchon's most optimistic novel. And yet it is also the saddest in its exploration of how the nation lost the capacity to perceive or care about political and moral truth. In the sixties a turncoat named Rex killed Weed; in the eighties, Rex 84 is Pynchon's version of a turncoat national mission: to reelect Reagan, King of the Tube. Pynchon's concern is the evolution of a betrayal: how the spirit of the sixties turned from opposition to collaboration.

For Pynchon the betrayal began accidentally when the sixties radicals who used media coverage as the tool of revolution unwittingly eroded the differences between acting and activism. The tenets of an older radicalism and the conservative belief in freedom tempered by order have since been ground up in photo-ops, cover-ups applied like makeup and insubstantial political clichés. As one child of sixties flower children points out to his parents' friends: "You sure didn't understand much about the Tube. Minute the Tube got hold of you folks that was it, that whole alternative America, el deado meato, just like th' Indians, sold it all to your real enemies, and even in 1970 dollars—it was way too cheap."

Self-images now derive from sit-coms, and the screens we watch seem to watch us if only because of the standardization of personality: you are what you watch. Fear of an emerging police state or the exercise of power has been obsolesced by the distortions of the cop show in which the audience cheers on the Dirty Harrys who routinely trample the constitution. RICO seizures of assets before trial undermine due process presumptions of innocence before guilt is proved. The country seems to have neither states nor states of mind but is divided into "Cable Zones which in time became political units in their own right as the Tubal entrepreneurs went extending their webs. . . ."

Even LSD has given way to Liquid Crystal Displays. The staple of the counterculture was the drug that stood for a politics of ecstasy, a platform outside the confines even of mortality. Pynchon's holdouts against the establishment are dopers like Zoyd, who farm marijuana and dream of the sixties when LSD enabled them to believe that they would never die. Now middle aged, they discover the establishment is also in the drug business. Pynchon uses the War on Drugs as a media blitzkrieg concealing in deceptive images the terrible sameness of the establishment and counterculture. The Feds use Civil RICO statutes to run the enforcement mechanisms on the proceeds of crime. For Pynchon the War on Drugs is not only taxation by another name but an attempt to substitute controlled substances for drugs like LSD that induced illusions of limitless freedom. In effect the slogan Drug Free America and the belief that Drugs Free America are flip sides of the same use of drugs as a control mechanism. The establishment drugs, such as thorazine and alcohol, help defeat memory; the Tube has become the approved opiate of the People under the aegis of the president who is its greatest pusher-addict.

The symbol of microchipped America is the "new" woman. Frenesi is not so much a person as a representative of the spirit of "progress" as a California girl. Named after a fifties pop song by her Hollywood leftist parents, she was a red-diaper baby raised with a sense of social responsibility. A product of pop culture and populism, she has become the kind of collaborator her parents despised. Bisexual, she is determined not to be bored or ground down in the usual female trap of motherhood. Frenesi found bearing a child an encounter with death, feeling

> descent to cold regions of hatred for the tiny life, raw, parasitic, using her body through the wearying months and now still looking to control her . . . . She had been privileged to live outside of Time, to enter and leave at will, looting and manipulating, weightless, invisible. Now Time had claimed her again, put her under house arrest, taken her passport away. Only an animal with a full set of pain receptors after all.

In revolt against biology, she looks like a woman but behaves like a computerized image.

Pynchon's emblematic sixties woman prefers silicon life to humanity with its fleshy, carbon-based predilection for childbearing and nurturing. Like V., who is imagined in *V.* as an autoerotic machine with perfect plastic skin, Frenesi is a filmmaker who is an adventuress in celluloid. She becomes involved with three men who represent three common sixties paths toward self-transcendence: Weed, the intellectual she helps kill; Brock, whose life she tries to emulate; and Zoyd, whom she abandons. Her attraction to Brock is to his ability to stage pleasure shows in motel rooms. He is her erotic videogame; his life as Prosecutor the power game she can play "just for the score. . . . His penis had become the joystick with which, hurtling into the future, she would try to steer . . . [into] underground time . . . that could take her nowhere outside its own tight and falsely deathless perimeter." For her, computer-generated "life" offers the illusion of immortality, just as computer-generated FBI checks become her energy source as an informant.

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The surviving sixties male is represented by Zoyd, a passionate old doper who loves Prairie and junk food. Yet his once "holy" insanity has been debased to entertainment. He survives on mental-disability checks hilariously reearned each year by jumping through barroom windows for network news. His gift is for "transfenestration," going through windows out of the current world into the memory of the Indian-haunted forest, into love for his daughter, and into a perspective in which it is possible to tell the difference between having and losing your spirit.

And yet the very quest for spiritual freedom and immortal youth may have helped turn the youth culture into collaborators.

> Brock Vond's genius was to have seen in the activities of the sixties left not threats to order but unacknowledged desires for it. While the Tube was proclaiming youth revolution against parents of all kinds, and most viewers were accepting this story, Brock saw . . . the need only to stay children forever, safe inside some extended national Family.

One would have to conclude from this novel that the family is the umbilicus of cable and electronic connection, both conduits of the larger culture of information in which surveillance and consumption intertwine. This is the computerized world in which every time you use a bank or credit card your needs are gratified, even as your whereabouts can be clocked. Whether on the left or right, we are, for Pynchon, all guilty of having been utterly lulled by it.

The culture of information has displaced the need for a literal FBI even as the use of video technology has so softened political discourse as to neutralize differences. Pynchon's warriors of the left and right find themselves obsolesced, enervated by an attrition of differences. No one any longer cares what is right or true. Even Thanatoid Ghosts like Weed, who come to the Karmology Clinic, have lost the drive to settle scores with those who betrayed them. Be they ghosts, old dopers for whom drugs no longer work, discarded informants, Prosecutors, or Tube addicts in need of "tubaldetoxification units," the survivors of the sixties come through as dispirited, burnt-out cases.

The deforested future belongs to eighties youth: Prairie and her boyfriend, Isaiah Two Four, who was named by his flower-power parents for the biblical passage exhorting the transformation of swords into ploughshares. Isaiah Two Four is a young man with business plans: he wants to develop violence theme parks for family fun featuring "Third World Thrills, a jungle obstacle course where you got to . . . blast away at surprise pop-up targets shaped like indigenous guerrilla elements." Pynchon ends his novel with what has been hailed as an image of optimism: Prairie, alone and safe in the woods, is licked awake by her dog. Is she the new Thoreau? Or is Pynchon borrowing for a future America Harry Truman's advice to those looking for a friend: "Go buy a dog!"

Optimistic or not, *Vineland* is a dazzling work. In addition to the major lines of the plot, it offers dozens of hilarious side glimpses into California cults, Americanized Zen communes, and a host of minor characters worth volumes in their own right. Although it does not equal *Gravity's Rainbow* or *V.* for sheer brilliance of conception, it bears the mark of Pynchon's unique and troubled genius.

Jeffrey Scheuer

TRENCHANT AND TURGID

CONSTRUCTING THE POLITICAL SPECTACLE, by Murray Edelman. University of Chicago Press, 1988. 137 pp. $7.95 (paper).

Long-time readers of the *New Yorker* may recall cartoon-style ads for the now-defunct *Philadelphia Bulletin*. An odd little man in a crowd points in horror at some impending disaster while all around him remain oblivious, absorbed in the *Bulletin*. There is a similar quality of urgent and unheeded warning in certain radical critiques of bourgeois society. The task of the left is, in part, to awaken the popular conscience to outrageous social conditions; the vast majority are deaf to such wake-up calls. A difference, however, is that the very subtlety and sophistication of the radical vision often undermine its message, while the sources of outrage remain invisible to all but their immediate victims and critics.

Murray Edelman's short but very dense analysis of political discourse offers an interesting case in point. It is a work of such complexity yet also of such thematic profundity that a close reading is a rewarding ordeal. *Constructing the Political Spectacle* is less a tightly woven argument than an alternative conceptual language: a Marxian amalgam of politics, psychology, and sociology within a unified ideological framework. It is largely the framework of critical theory and the Frankfurt School, but with disparate sources and channels, including Orwell, Wittgenstein, and later critical theorists such as Habermas. It is both a brilliant

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adaptation of Marxian themes and a specimen of academic turgidity.

To make sense of this critique one must itemize several key assumptions, which, though never stated systematically, recur throughout. It is rooted first of all in the idea, central to Marx and to socialism in general, that social life is profoundly influenced by unobservables: subtly concealed or obscured meanings, intentions, values, and relationships.

A related organizing principle is integration: whereas bourgeois culture and classical thought atomize reality and individuals, Marx and critical theory posit a world in constant dialectical flux between fact and value, subject and object, language and reality. The conceptual boundaries between individuals, institutions, and ideas are fluid, so that "observers and what they observe construct one another."

Politics, according to Edelman, is a shell game in which ideology is everywhere, but always concealed as something else. Issues are invented, defined, and ranked for ideological reasons. The complexity of social life is reduced to simple polarities such as praise and blame, fear and hope, threats and reassurances, ally and enemy.

Moreover, politics isn't just a game: it's a language game. Language is a shimmering surface, reflecting and concealing at once. As such, language is not merely a descriptive tool, but a performative instrument. It is the key to winning votes and loyalties, defining problems and debates, and advancing ideological goals. Language, the critical theorists argue, is not the rational communication of meaning: it is action. This radical idea was perfected, of course, by the handlers of George Bush.

The news media, as the principle vehicles of political language, are a natural focus of discourse analysis, and their role in the political game is at once crucial and elusive. According to Edelman, the media don't simply report social reality but "construct" it, creating a world of symbols that tend to "reinforce established power structures and value hierarchies." The fraudulent pretension of the press to objectivity is merely a symptom of the basic discontinuity between social appearance and reality.

The grounding assumptions of Edelman's tome are powerful explanatory tools, acknowledging that information is an elemental medium of power relations in modern society. The question is whether they are plausible enough, clear enough, and *simple* enough to alter public discourse beyond the confines of the scholarly left.

Edelman assumes familiarity with a dense theoretical background; he continually uses, without defining, such trendy academic terms as transaction, construction, condensation symbol, subjectivity, signifier, sign, and value allocation. He forgoes the challenge of writing clearly. Although rich in insight, passages such as the following are mind-numbing:

> [E]ach action or term carries the trace of others, constructing an exploding set of scenes and signs that radiate endlessly, actions and language that defines their meaning evoking still other acts and terms that are supplementary, contradictory, or logically irrelevant. The challenge, for those who act and for those who try to understand, is to recognize the range of meanings and of strategies implicit in each item that emerges from the radiation of signifiers.

So thoroughgoing a complaint against the social order implies the need for some concrete remedy; yet concreteness is not what *Constructing the Political Spectacle* is about. It is so broadly gauged—aimed not at this or that political system, but at politics as such—that the likeliest antidote would be a revolution of consciousness among the actors and institutions involved: at the very least, a much more critical public attitude toward the politics of news and information.

Yet the very abstruseness of Edelman's argument militates against that end, and in this it reflects a basic dilemma of theoretical socialism. Its more fluid and intricate conceptual substructure, and its greater moral imagination, set it apart from rival ideologies but also impose political burdens. So long as that substructure is expounded in works such as this one, it will remain a trenchant academic alternative to liberal capitalism, but no more. □

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In Memoriam

EDITH H. TARCOV
1919–1990

I remember the evening I discovered that Edith Tarcov was an unusual woman. An article I'd written for *Dissent* had been accepted but not yet set in type. One night at about ten I received a phone call from Edith. "I've been thinking about the second sentence in your article," she said. "Of course the sentiment is lovely . . . but I've been wondering about that *dash* you use. Don't you think it's really a bit . . . harsh? Don't you think the sentence might be better with a simple comma?"

Edith was an editor of the old school: tireless, exacting, and passionately devoted to clarity. She was merciless in her determination to root out careless prose and careless thought—but she was unfailingly patient with writers, even those of us most guilty of those sins.

Like most dedicated people, she could sometimes be difficult. But if she demanded a lot of the people she worked with, she demanded much more of herself. She worked like a demon, for little pay, little reward of any kind, lavishing great care on the smallest details.

I worked closely with Edith from 1983, when I came to *Dissent,* until she retired in late 1985; after that we met often for lunch. I came to admire her, as I learned how hard-won her habitual good cheer was. With an awful regularity, her life had been marked by grief: her parents were murdered in the Nazi death camps; her husband, Oscar, died very young of a heart attack; and one of her grandchildren was killed in an automobile accident recently. I remember the afternoon when she lent me the Saul Bellow novel *More Die of Heartbreak*. She held it in her hands a moment, looking at the title. "The terrible thing," she said, "is that one doesn't die of heartbreak. Your heart breaks . . . and you live."

Despite everything she'd lived through, it wasn't in her nature to let bitterness or anything else slow her down. She gave of herself completely, in just about everything she did. She wasn't in good health—in recent years her illness prevented her from flying around town on her bicycle, as she had until about the age of sixty—but even so, she pursued a schedule of activities that I found exhausting even to contemplate.

I saw her last about a month before she died. She was walking on West End Avenue, a block away from me. I was late for work, and I didn't call out to her. But I stopped for a moment to watch her before she turned the corner. She had a kind of lift to her step, and she held her head back, like a dancer. I remember being struck by her youthfulness.

BRIAN MORTON

I first got in the habit of visiting Edith Tarcov when she was managing editor of *Dissent*. Rather than mail my page proofs back, I would drop them off at her West End Avenue apartment just before starting my daily run through Central Park. After she stopped her work at *Dissent,* the late afternoon still seemed the best time to meet.

As soon as the weather turned warm, we would sit on her balcony, where our initial subject was always Edith's plants. Would a late frost get her tulips? Did some grape hyacinth bulbs I had brought from Ohio have fungus? What I remember most about those afternoons, however, was that no subject was off limits. Edith could talk as passionately about Ernie Banks, the Chicago Cubs shortstop of the 1950s, as she could about the newest Saul Bellow novel.

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I had just arrived in New York when I first met Edith, and she quickly led me to believe that editors are supposed to make your writing come out better. She did her blue-penciling so deftly that it wasn't until I found myself getting into fights with editors at other magazines that I realized how easy she made a tough job seem. Like all great teachers, Edith had the knack of asking questions that allowed you to become smarter than you thought you were.

Over the last few years Edith found herself spending more time than she wished in the company of doctors. It angered rather than discouraged her. She wasn't worried about longevity but, relentless gardener that she was, about being up to spring.

NICOLAUS MILLS □

HAL DRAPER

We are saddened by the news that Hal Draper died this past January in Berkeley, California, at age seventy-five. Though our relations were strained by political differences—or differences in emphasis—we recall the many years of friendship as participants in the socialist movement going back to the 1930s. Hal never wrote for *Dissent;* in his view we lacked a sufficiently hard political program. We felt that Hal tended to be rigid, even sectarian, though we never questioned his sharp intelligence, his talent as a writer, or his devotion to democratic socialism.

A Marxist, Hal wrote a number of books that were illuminating, notably *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution,* published in four volumes by Monthly Review Press (1975–85). In later years he put together the rewards of a lifelong "hobby": *The Complete Works of Heinrich Heine: A Modern Version,* published in 1982 and also highly praised.

Hal joined the YPSL (Young Peoples Socialist League) in the 1930s. Later, he joined with Max Shachtman in forming what became the Independent Socialist League (ISL). In the late forties he edited its weekly, *Labor Action,* for several years before moving to California. When the ISL won its legal battle to have its name removed from the government's subversive list despite the FBI's dirty campaign to fight the challenge, Hal opposed the ISL's decision to dissolve and enter the Socialist party, and he left the organization.

Settling eventually in Berkeley, he worked as a librarian at the university and with his wife organized a socialist club on campus. Though the label of "eminence grise" infuriated him, he gave counsel to such leaders of the student upheaval on that campus as Mario Savio. Upon retirement he devoted himself principally to writing.

Though we maintained a hit-or-miss friendship, visiting with him and his wife when our travels took us to the San Francisco area, we lost touch and were distressed to learn that he had become reclusive in his last years. Though friendships were fractured as they so often are in political polemic (and Hal never gave an inch), the socialist movement is injured by his loss. We mourn Hal's death.

EMANUEL GELTMAN
IRVING HOWE □

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again—or Moscow would simply have to face facts. Overnight, the Soviet Union could cease to exist, no great trick since there was never any such thing in the first place.

What would happen then? Perhaps the Russians would vote in extreme left socialists just as they did in 1917. Spontaneous councils of workers would spring up in the coal fields of Siberia and the Ukraine just as they did in 1917 and again in the summer of 1989 when the miners decided that the state had violated the social contract by failing to supply them with soap. Perhaps those councils would retain their historical name as soviets. Sometime after the grand collapse, Russia and the Ukraine might well decide to unite for economic and security reasons. And other of the original republics might also join in, if only to protect themselves against ethnic gang war.

Who knows, this new entity might even be called . . . the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, USSR for short. □

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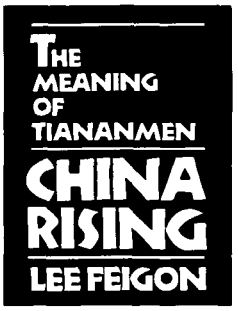

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